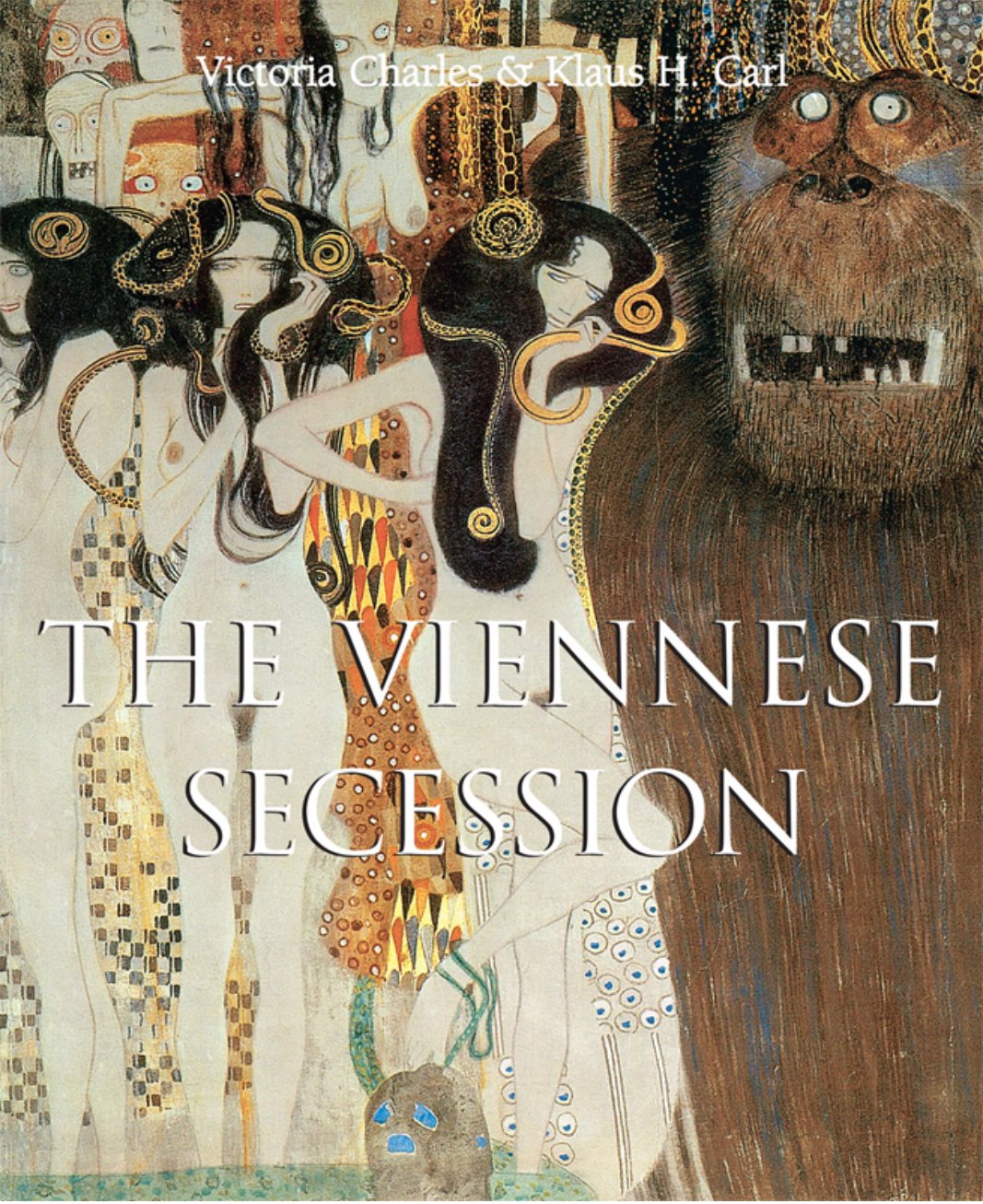
Victoria Charles & Klaus H. Carl
THE VIENNESE SECESSION

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Victoria Charles & Klaus H. Carl

The Viennese Secession

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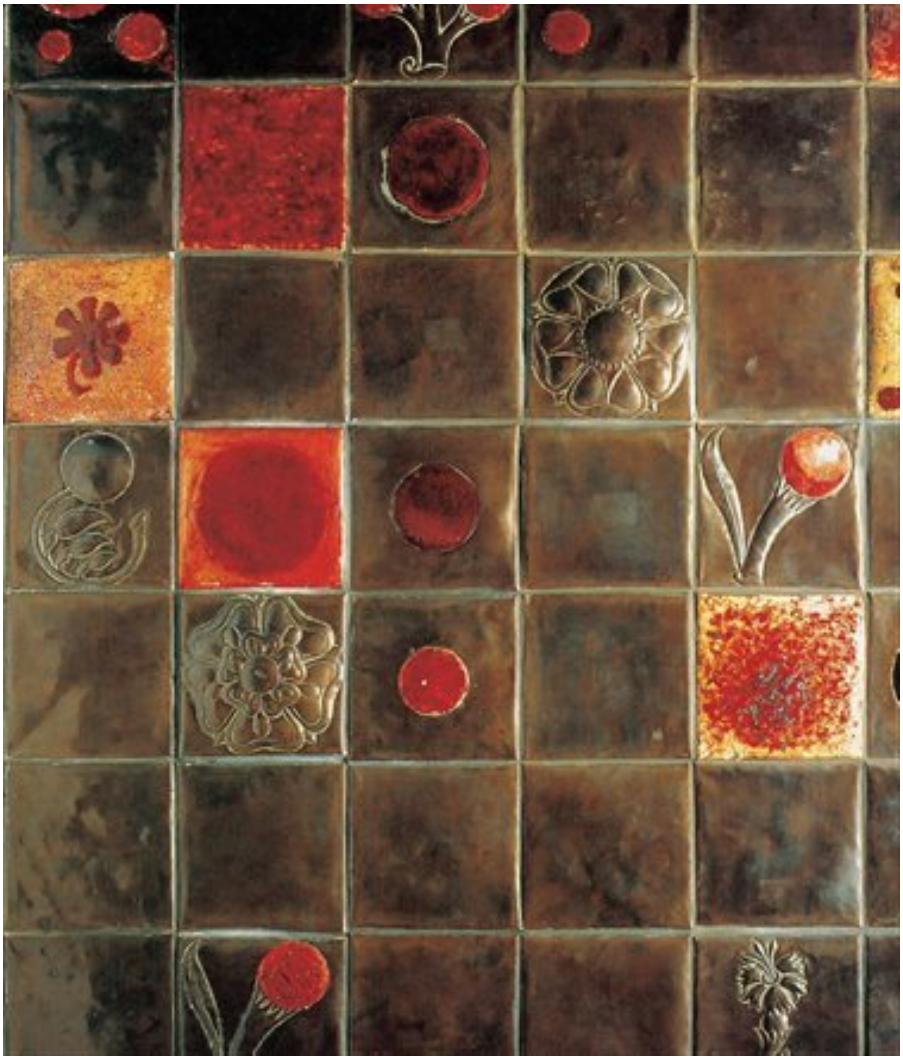


Charles Robert Ashbee, Chimneypiece,
executed by Arthur Cameron for the Magpie and Stump (Pub),
37 Cheyne Walk, London, 1893.
Plain, repoussé and enamelled copper tiles, 215 x 201.5 cm.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

PREFACE

To write a text on the Viennese Secession – an art movement that, despite its short creative period of barely ten years, had an enormous impact in the development of modern art – without consulting the contemporary witnesses of that period would be a futile venture. For this reason, this book will feature the writing of two contemporaries of the Secession artists, both believable and competent columnists whose testimonies are as relevant today as they were in the early 20th century. Excerpts from their commentaries have been carefully translated from the variety of German that was used before the Second Orthographical Conference in 1902. The two experts in question are Hermann Bahr and Ludwig Hevesi.

The Austrian Hermann Bahr, born 1863 in Linz, was a poet, outstanding essayist, influential art critic, and expert of contemporary literary movements from naturalism to expressionism, as well as one of the most important comedy authors of his time. Furthermore, he was a spokesman for *Jung-Wien* (Young Vienna), a group of writers and literary critics, who called themselves "Viennese coffeehouse writers" and used *Die Zeit*, a weekly literary magazine owned and published by Hermann Bahr between 1894 and 1904, as a mouthpiece for their ideas. He lived for over twenty years in Berlin, where he mainly worked with theatre manager, director, and actor Max Reinhardt (1873-1943). After two decades in Berlin, he left Germany for Austria to work in Salzburg and Vienna. In 1922, he returned to Germany to settle down in Munich, where he died twelve years later. Beyond his collection of critical essays and his activities as playwright of comedies, he also composed several works of prose and drama. To list every of Bahr's accomplishments would go far beyond the scope of this preface.

Ludwig Hevesi (1842-1910), born under the name Ludwig Hirsch in the Austro-Hungarian town of Heves, was a journalist and writer. He began his professional career in a Hungarian daily newspaper when he was 24-years-old and was shortly after promoted to report for the arts and culture section of the Viennese *Fremdenblatt*. During the reign of Franz Joseph I (1830-1916), ruler of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hevesi worked especially for the Secession as columnist and art critic. He once wrote:

> [...] "Indeed, there is no guidebook to the Secession." That was my response when a young art enthusiast, confronted with the first success of the new movement, asked me whether there was a book that he could consult to better understand the uncomfortable paradigmatic shift that he was faced with. If someone would put this question forward today, I would recommend the following book […].

The Viennese Secession was not a singular event that came from nowhere. The movement had precursors and, naturally, also successors, and soon other, younger artists from other associations started rebelling against the rigid predominance of the established and generally rather conservative artists, who confronted all these new ideas for the training and education of artists with an uncompromisingly defensive attitude. Having no chance to exhibit their works together with already recognised artists – their work didn't usually clear the stage of pre-selection that was supervised by a jury which was evidently composed of these very artists – thus deprived them often of the opportunity to find buyers for their work.

In order to generate a holistic depiction of the Viennese Secession, a brief overview of the most important precursors of the movement is necessary.

Ditha Moser, *Folding calendar*, 1907.
Donation from Oswald Oberhuber,
Collection and Archive, Universität für
angewandte Kunst, Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, *Gnawing Sorrow*
(detail from second panel of *The Beethoven Frieze*), 1902.
Casein on plaster, height: 220 cm.
Secession, Vienna.

VIENNA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Even though the Viennese upper class were passionately fond of dances, the opera, theatre, and music, they remained extremely conservative. Strict Catholicism accompanied by rigid social morals made them seem, at least in appearance, unmoving and close-lipped. While the rest of society was only too happy to embrace all sorts of pleasures then deemed sensual, for example the waltz, the so-called "good" society rejected any topic that was unaesthetic, erotic or even mildly sexual. Thus different standards were applied to different strata of society, which is telling about the dominant concept of morality in Vienna in particular, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in general, at the end of the 19th century.

In these decades, Vienna was a city at the zenith of its power and influence. Kaiser Franz Joseph I was the monarch of an empire of over fifty million people, encompassing several dozen constituent kingdoms and duchies from Bohemia to Serbia. However, at the end of World War I, at the beginning of 1918, the empire only had several months of existence left. With Kaiser Karl's failed attempt to conserve the empire in the form of a federal state, Austria suddenly became a small nation of seven million inhabitants, of which three million lived in and around Vienna. Barely twenty years later, Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) would annex the Republic, thus sealing its fate in the tumultuous years to follow.

However, the decline of Austria had begun long before the events of 1918 or 1934. A succession of military defeats were already a clear warning sign that the prolonged existence of the empire was not guaranteed. Furthermore, the rising impoverishment of thousands of Czechs, Hungarians, Poles, Jews, Romanians, and Romani led many to leave the poorest parts of the empire to look for work in the capital. However, their lot did not improve as the city could not provide enough work and accommodation, which led them to live in worse conditions than before. These social problems were ignored by the rich and influential citizens of Vienna who decided to blind and distract themselves with a true flurry of pleasure-filled activities instead.

These developments also influenced the decorative arts, which witnessed a lot of change and upheaval between the decline of the influential French style and the World Fair in Paris in 1889, which was held in honour of the hundredth birthday of the French Revolution. There was no simple and fluid transition from one style to another. Between the rise of new ideas and artistic techniques, older styles were consistently resurrected. Even as late as 1900, artistic influences popularised during the time of the European Restoration, or

French art during the reign of Napoleon III (1808-1873), could still be seen in the exhibits of the World Fair. However, the imitation of these styles was not consistent enough for a coherent movement to form, mainly because there were many artists who wanted to distinguish themselves from their predecessors by expressing their own decorative ideals.

Despite their novelty, these new movements were not isolated from the influences of their predecessors. They were characterised by weariness from seeing the old forms and patterns repeated over and over again, from having to face the infinite imitation of furniture from the time of the French kings that all answered to the name of "Louis", beginning with Louis XIII (1601-1643), followed by Louis XIV (1643-1715) to Louis XVI (1754-1793). They also were characterised by a general dismissal of the common shapes and pattern of the Gothic style and the Renaissance. In essence, this new movement stood for the acceptance of a new art that was grounded in the modern age and not dependant on previous influences for credibility.

Émile Gallé, *Orchid Vase*.
Glass with inserted ornaments and relief.
Private collection.

Louis Comfort Tiffany,
Fluted Flower-Form Vase,
between 1900 and 1905. Lead glass.

Before 1789, the year that marked the end of the *Ancien Régime*, different styles usually developed with dependence on the monarchs; this new century wanted its own style. The desire for freedom from art and fashion dictated by rulers and sovereigns was not only perceivable in France but also beyond its borders. Many countries in Europe witnessed the slow awakening of proud nationalism that was rooted in the wish for literature and art that could be called their own. In short, this desire created an emergence of new understanding and appreciation of art that was not a servile copy of past glory and even less an imitation of foreign influences. In addition, contrary to previous decades, the need for applied art skyrocketed, mainly because this branch of art had nearly died out in the 19th century. In the past, everything was richly decorated: from home décor and dresses to weapons and simple household objects. Every object possessed its own ornaments and its own beauty and elegance. The 19th century, on the other hand, essentially looked for functionality rather than elegance. Beauty, elegance and ornaments became superfluous. This century, which began with a totalitarian inde \ifference towards decorative beauty and elegance and ended so sadly in the drutal disregardof international human rights, was characterised by a paralysis of taste and aesthetics.

The return of the exiled concept of aesthetics was also at the heart of the Art Nouveau movement and its Austro-German manifestation, the *Jugendstil*. In France, people began to feel the absurdity of the situation and started to demand creativity, innovation and authenticity from cabinetmakers, decorators, stucco specialists, and even architects. This gave rise to a form of applied art that directly catered to the need of a new generation.

The World Fair of 1889

The multiple artistic trends that would lay the foundation for a new holistic style of art should manifest themselves on the Paris World Fair of 1889 first. The English exhibitors showcased their very own taste in furniture. The American silversmiths Graham and Augustus Tiffany decorated the products of their workshops with fascinating new ornaments while Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) showed the products of his revolutionary technique for the creation of stained glass.

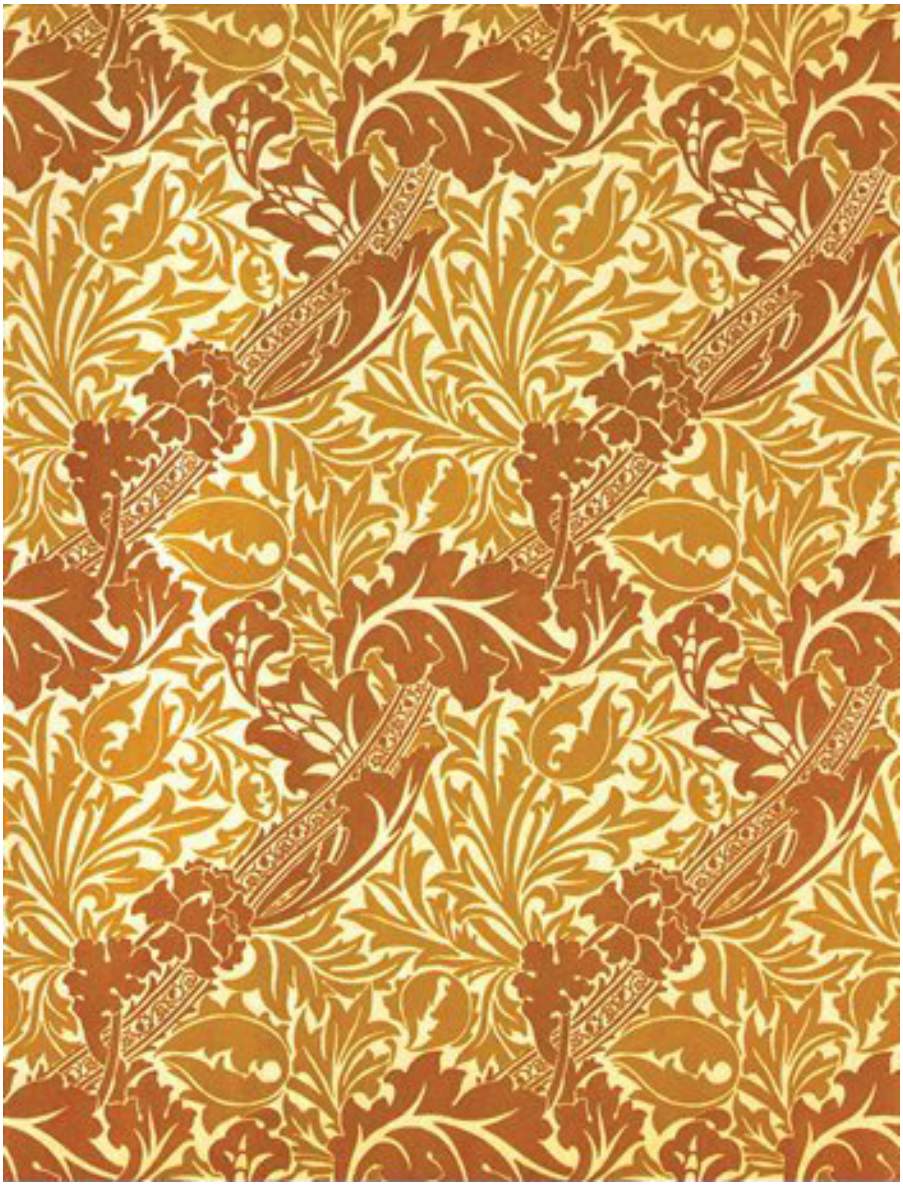
An elite group of French artists exhibited individual pieces that also marked a progress in the spreading of the popularity of applied art in France. Émile Gallé (1846-1904) put furniture and coloured vases of his own design on display while Clément Massier (1845-1917), Albert Dammouse (1848-1926), and Auguste Delaherche (1857-1940) could convince the visitors of the world fair with mottled earthenware in hitherto rarely used brilliant colours and daring shapes. Henri Vever (1875-1932), The House of

Boucheron, and Lucien Falize (1839-1897) presented intricately designed jewellery and silverware. The new trend towards elegant and capillary-thin ornaments was technically advanced to such a high degree that Falize even presented commonplace silverware with complex herbal designs.

The new ideas that were presented at the World Fair soon blossomed: everyone pushed towards a revolution in art. They sought liberation from the ideals and prejudice of the so-called 'exalted' art, and thus artists all over Europe began searching for new forms of artistic expression. In 1891, the *Societé Nationale des Beaux-Arts* created a new department for applied art, which was initially not held in very high esteem but at least managed to participate in the *Salon* with pewterware by Jules Desbois (1851-1935), Alexandre Charpentier (1856-1909), and Jean Baffier (1851-1920). In 1895, the rising popularity of applied art forced the *Société des Artistes Français* to accept the creation of a department solely dedicated to this newly revived branch for the annual *Salon* exhibitions. Later that year, the Hamburg-born Siegfried Bing (1838-1905), after returning from an assignment in the United States, opened a shop which he called "Art Nouveau".

Henri Vever, *Vase with Crickets.*
Bronze and enamelled silver.
Exhibited in the Salon of the National Society
of Fine Arts in 1904 in Paris.
Robert Zehil collection.

Edward Burne-Jones and **Kate Faulkner** (design)
and **John Broadwood** (production),
Grand piano, 1883.
Oak, stained and decorated with gold and
silver-gilt gesso, 266 x 140.5 x 45.7 cm.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



William Morris, *Tapestry*.

Émile Gallé, *Vitrine with Artistic Vases.*
Marquetry and glass.
Macklowe Gallery, New York.

Eugène Grasset, *Salon des cent*, 1894.
Print for a colour poster.
Victor and Gretha Arwas collection.

Walter Crane,
Swans, wallpaper design, 1875.
Gouache and watercolour, 53.1 x 53 cm.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Art in England at the End of the Century

The rise of Art Nouveau was no less remarkable in other countries. In England, the popularity of venues such as the Liberty & Co. Department Store, the Merton-Abbey Workshops, and the Kelmscott-Press, which was managed by William Morris (1834-1896) and supplied with designs and ideas by the two painters Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) and Walter Crane (1845-1915), rose steadily. This trend even reached London's "Grand Bazaar", Maple & Co., where the customers were offered Art Nouveau while the house designs fell more and more out of favour.

The main representatives of this new movement of applied art were, already mentioned, William Morris and John Ruskin (1819-1900). John Ruskin – more of a predecessor to the Arts and Crafts Movement – was well known for being a staunch believer in art and beauty, almost to such a degree that his concept of art began resembling a religion on its own. Similarly, Morris was not simply an artisan but also a true artist and poet. His wallpapers and fabrics revolutionised home décor and their success enabled him to build a factory dedicated to the production of these products. Beside his artistic efforts he was also a politically active member of several socialist movements and parties.

Ruskin and Morris were, of course, not the only leading figures of the movement. There was also the architect Philip Speakman Webb (1831-1915) and the painter Walter Crane, who could rightfully be called the most creative interior decorator of his time, possessed as he was with an impeccable sense of elegance. They were a beacon for a whole generation of outstanding architects, designers, decorators and illustrators who flocked to their banner to realise their dreams of a new art together. Their artistic prowess is beyond comparison: like in a pantheistic dream they composed a fragile melody of ornaments that fused flora and fauna into a transcendent whole. This ornament-based art, with its filigreed patterns and arabesques, was reminiscent of the exuberant ornament-artists of the Renaissance. Not by accident either. The English artists intricately studied the elaborate engraving techniques – which today are rather under-appreciated – from the 15th and 16th centuries. In a similar manner they studied the wood, copper and niello artwork of their contemporaries from the Munich school.

Despite using the art of the past as direct inspiration, the designers of the English Art Nouveau never copied it reverently, afraid of creating something new; quite the opposite, they enriched this art with the pure joy of new creation. One simply has to skim through old editions of *The Studio Magazine, The Artist*, or *The Magazine of Art*[1] and marvel at the designs for decorative book covers and various other ornamented media in order to see the immense creativity that animated the movement. It is quite fascinating to see how much young talent – among these talented artists were also quite a

few girls and women – was unearthed in the art competitions that were organised by *The Studio* or South Kensington[2]. The new prints, fabrics and wallpapers which changed the traditional way of home décor, created by Crane, Morris and designer Charles Voysey (1857-1941), might have been inspired by patterns seen in nature itself but it also referenced the traditional Oriental and European principles of ornament taught by authentic decorators of the past.

William Morris or **Edward Burne-Jones**,
Light and Darkness, Night and Day
(detail from *The Creation*), 1861.
Stained glass window.
All Saints Church, Selsley, Gloucestershire.

William Morris or **Edward Burne-Jones**,
Heaven, Earth and Water
(detail from *The Creation*), 1861.
Stained glass window.
All Saints Church, Selsley, Gloucestershire.

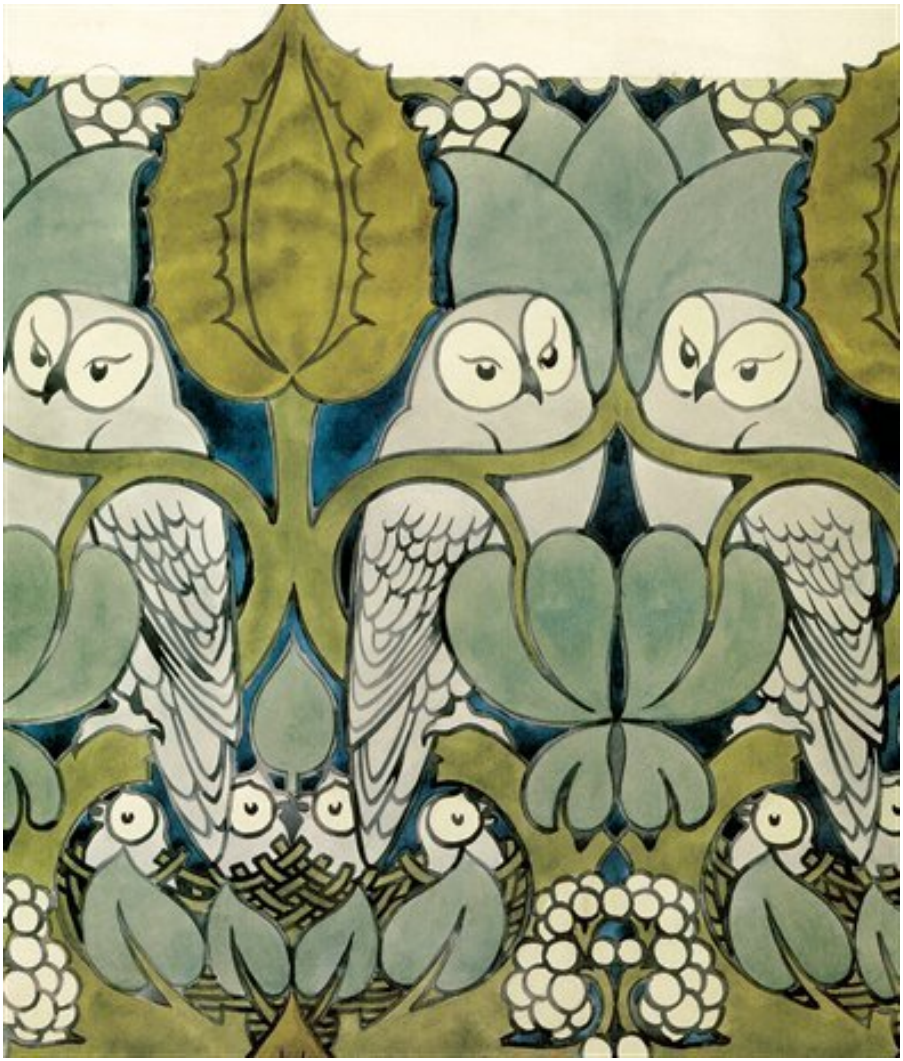
The architecture in England was clearly dominated by the formal classicism based on Greek, Roman, and Italian models. With the Arts and Crafts movement, England finally rebelled against this conformism and rejuvenated English art. At the frontlines of this revolution were, first, architects like Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852) who participated in creating the design of the Houses of Parliament and, later, a group of Pre-Raphaelite artists, who preferred their contemporary art more than the art of the 16th century and the classicism that was so foreign to the English tradition.

Architects were also responsible for reviving old English art by applying the simple, elegant workmanship of 16th and 17th century English architecture from the times of Queen Anne (1665-1714) to contemporary tastes. Old English art was not the only source of inspiration they sought. Given the similarity in climate, manners, and a certain degree of ethnic cousinship, it was only natural for them to use North European influences as well. From the colourful architecture of Flanders to the red brick buildings of Frisia, Denmark, and the north of Germany, they were given a multitude of inspiration.

The majority of these architects did not feel diminished to also work as interior decorators. Quite the opposite – they could not imagine it any other way. How else could it be possible to achieve perfect harmony between the outside and the inside of a house? In the interior they sought the same harmony that was apparent on the outside. With tapestries and furniture they composed an ensemble of shapes, patterns, and muted colours in which every single component was perfectly attuned to each other.[3]

Among the most notable architects were Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912), Thomas Edward Collcutt (1840-1924), the members of Ernest George's (1839-1922) office and Harold Ainsworth Peto (1854-1933). They brought back a notion that was missing in the movement: the subordination of all art under architecture. Without this idea it is impossible to develop a distinctive style. We have to thank them for the re-introduction of pastel-décor (from the 18th century), the re-discovery of architectonic ceramics (from the ancient Orient) and finally for brightening the predominantly grey- and brown-shaded colour palette with sea-green or peacock-blue.

The reformation of architecture and applied art in England was only a national phenomenon at first. It might not be immediately apparent in the work of William Morris but his main passion was English art and history. This passion resulted in a return to colours, shapes and patterns which no longer originated from Greek, Roman, or Italian art, therefore constituting a truly English and no longer classical art. Beside wallpapers and tapestries, England now had distinctively individual furniture which was new and modern; the interiors of its houses showcased the decorative composites and colours of the new movement.



Charles Francis Annesley Voysey,
Design for *Owl* Wallpaper and Fabric, c. 1897.
Crayon and watercolour, 50.8 x 40 cm.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Aubrey Beardsley,
Poster for *The Studio*, 1893.
Engraving. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Aubrey Beardsley, *The Toilet of Salome*,
drawing from Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, 1893.
Line block print, ink on paper.
Private collection.

Art on the Continent at the End of the Century

The movement did not remain exclusively in England. Soon, an exhibition, held in Brussels by the artistic society *La Libre Esthétique* in 1894, dedicated several rooms to decorative art. Later that year, the *Maison d'Art* Gallery, located in the former residence of famous Belgian lawyer and writer Edmond Picard (1836-1924), opened its doors to the public and showcased decorative art from all over Europe that was not only from the workshops of celebrated artists but also featured the artwork of relatively unknown artisans. Roughly at the same time, various groups of artists started to gather in other countries such as Germany, Denmark, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the

Netherlands.

The terms Art Nouveau and *Jugendstil* quickly became part of the contemporary vocabulary, but were at first not descriptive of any specific style or movment. Although most Secession-like movements came into being more or less simultaneously, with all of them revolting against the academic and established style in common, their social and artistic development still followed different paths, depending on the predominant taste and mentality in their cities or countries.

Hugo von Habermann,
Reclining Nude, 1907.
Oil on canvas, 100.5 x 83 cm.
Bavarian State Painting Collection,
Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

THE PRECURSORS OF THE VIENNESE SECESSION IN MUNICH AND BERLIN

Munich

Until the 1860s, the Munich style of painting closely followed the ideal of the Viennese folk-inspired painting. The artists from Munich painted picturesque landscapes, farm scenes with livestock, magnificent horses, as well as epic battles, and thus also adopted the sympathetic yet slightly naïve perception of reality inherent to the Viennese style. Maybe the Munich painters were missing the certain pragmatic cosmopolitanism that the Viennese artists at least knew how to emulate, since their school of painting could present a wide range of influences, from the Dutch school of landscape painters to, later, the Barbizon school.

Strangely, this period of painting in Munich is closely connected to one of the most formal artists that ever practiced their art in the city, but yet was able to introduce the theatre-like elegance of the history- and costume-painting of Paul Delaroche (1797-1859) and, a contemporary of Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) and Jean Augustus Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), Carl Theodor von Piloty (1826-1886). Today almost but forgotten, Piloty became the most important historic painter of his time and was ennobled because of his work in 1860. The titles of his paintings, for example, *Seni Standing Before the Corpse of Wallenstein* (1859), *Nero on the Ruins of the Burning Rome* (1860), *Assassination of Caesar* (1865), *Thusnelda in the Triumphal Procession of Germanicus* (1869/1873), characterise the nature and subject of his style of painting. Unfortunately however, his paintings rarely went deeper than the surface, from a psychological point of view. After his initial successes, Piloty and his paintings quickly fell into obscurity. Interestingly it is not his art that positively influenced later artists but rather the lessons he imparted to his pupils as a teacher.

Among his students, two developed two distinctive and vastly different styles, and thus mark the extreme opposites of Piloty's legacy. Wilhelm Leibl (1844-1900) was a hugely talented artist with a keen instinct for the representation of reality as well as gifted with the ability to portray psychological depth in his paintings, while Franz von Lenbach (1836-1904) focused on naturalistic landscapes, paintings with an architectural emphasis, and studies of people, like the Italian peasant portrayed in *The Young Sheperd* (1860). Essentially he continued in the same vein of painting as Piloty. During a journey through Spain, Lenbach came to the conclusion that it was impossible to surpass the old masters and that it would be best to continuously

make use of their insights. Consequently, Lenbach pushed his talent toward the portrait. Most of his portraits thus bear more than a passing resemblance to those of Diego Velázquez (1599-1660). His superficial mastery was met with success and he quickly found a lot of imitators and admirers. This popularity led some artists to assume the same tenet that Lenbach had found for himself: seeing the purpose and pinnacle of art as an imitation of the old masters, as well as abandoning any interest in contemporary art to such a degree that they even regarded it as “inartistic”.

Despite his counter-creative approach to art, Lenbach was a capable artist who had the remarkable skill of capturing the intimate nature of the mode in the portrait, which makes his achievements worth of note. Especially, since he had the opportunity to paint the portraits of several major personalities of his time, such as Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), Helmuth Graf von Moltke (1848-1916), Kaiser Wilhelm I (1797-1888), as well as other statesmen.

Max Liebermann, *Potato Harvester in the Dunes of Zandvoort*, 1895.
Oil on canvas, 75 x 105 cm.
On loan from the Paintings and Sculpture Collection of Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg.

Bruno Piglhein,
Ruhe auf der Flucht nach Ägypten
(Rest on the Flight to Egypt), 1890.
Oil on canvas, 146.3 x 220.5 cm.
Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

Bruno Piglhein,
Die Blinde im Mohnenfeld
(The Blind Woman in a Poppy Field), 1889.
Oil on canvas, 93.5 x 140 cm.
Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, Kassel.

At the end of the 19th century, Munich was undeniably the German capital of art. More artists lived in Munich than in Vienna and Berlin combined. The majority of these artists were members of one of the three big associations of that time: the *Künstlergesellschaft Allotria* (Allotria Artists' Association), *Künstler-Sänger-Verein* (Association of Artists and Singers), or the *Gesellige Vereinigung der Münchner Künstlergenossenschaft* (Convivial Union of Associated Artists in Munich). Including their families, these groups counted so many members that it became impossible to organise festivities together as they had done in the past; especially at times like carnival or the famous anniversaries, each association organised its own, which normally had country-wide fame. Similarly, several female artists banded together in an association called *Künstlerinnenverein* (Association of Female Artists) that lasted from 1882 to 1967.

Although Franz von Lenbach was the unofficial and uncrowned "king of artists" in Munich and his art dominated the general understanding of art, it was only a pseudo-rule as the differences between the associations were never more apparent, the polemics never more excessive and passionate and the competition never stronger than during those years. This development simply had to culminate in an incisive reorganisation in the form of a secession from

the general *Münchner Künstlergenossenschaft* (Association of Munich's Artists). The result was the *Münchner Secession,* which was founded in 1892.

This reorganisation didn't limit itself, as we will see later, to the fine arts, but also spread to music, literature, and architecture, finally evolving into a full-blown cultural revolution that spilled over into all of Europe.

Lovis Corinth, *Inntal-Landschaft*
(Landscape from the Inn Valley), 1910.
Oil on canvas, 75 x 99 cm.
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

Ludwig von Herterich, *Wife and Daughter of the Architect Max Littmann*, 1903.
Oil on canvas, 120.7 x 157.3 cm.
Bavarian State Painting Collection,
Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

Ludwig von Herterich,
Summer Evening, c. 1895.
Oil on canvas, 112 x 85 cm.
Bavarian State Painting Collection,
Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

Secessionist groups formed in several major cities in Germany such as Berlin, Darmstadt and Dresden. Finally the Secession also reached Vienna, where a group was founded in 1897. The art historian Hermann Uhde-Bernays, (1875-1965) noted: "The core of the argument was about novelty: a new art, new theatre, new opera, new concerts in new concert halls; it was about a rejuvenation of old schools, about a new and fresh life […]."

However, it was not only the difference in artistic conception that led to the argument. At the same time it was a struggle for power, influence and economic advantages; a struggle that also led to Secession-like movements in the USA and Japan. Despite all differences, the Munich artists agreed on one issue: the necessity of a shared artistic house, like the *Paint-Box* in Düsseldorf

that was built several decades prior, in 1848.

Since the artists could not finance such a project – the creation of a monumental and representative temple of art – on their own, they had to find solvent sponsors. With the help of Franz von Lenbach, who already had wealthy clientele, architect Gabriel von Seidl (1848-1913) and painter Otto Seitz (1846-1912), the direly needed funding could be accumulated.

Hugo von Habermann,
Self-portrait with Palette, 1893.
Oil on canvas, 91 x 109 cm.
Permanent loan from the Munich Secession,
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich.

The most important role in the construction of the building, however, was held by the publisher of *Münchner Neuesten Nachrichten* and well-known patron of the arts, Georg Hirth (1841-1916). Most likely it was his influence that made the municipality of Munich provide a building plot in the centre of the city, in the prestigious Kreuzviertel. The cornerstone for the building was laid on the 3 July 1893 and the construction of the Neo-Renaissance building began shortly afterwards. In 1900, seven years later, the building was inaugurated by the Prince Regent of Bavaria, Luitpold (1821-1912), who was an art enthusiast himself. Having a reputation for being a progressive thinker, from 1903 onwards he also allowed women to study at Bavarian universities.

It was Berlin, however, that "won the race" for the first Secession exhibition in Germany; an accomplishment that the city of Frankfurt, always having been a city of the arts, would have liked to achieve. Nevertheless, it was Munich that was the navel of the German art world for now. The exhibitions attracted several well-known artists: Paul Klee came to Munich in

October of 1900 from Switzerland, Wassily Kandinsky travelled from Moscow to Munich to attend the classes held by Franz von Stuck, while Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso also came to express their enthusiasm for the movement and its exhibitions.

Franz von Stuck, *Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse and the Rhine*, 1907.
Oil on wood, 123 x 103 cm.
Hessian House Foundation, Schlossmuseum, Darmstadt.

Franz von Stuck,
The Guardian of Paradise, 1889.
Oil on canvas.
Museum Villa Stuck, Munich.

The Artists of the Munich Secession

The most important members of the Secession were, to mention a few, the first president of the movement, painter and sculptor Bruno Piglhein (1848-1894), as well as the painter, art-pedagogue, and teacher Ludwig von Herterich (1856-1932), who ultimately could never satisfy the high hopes that he had raised with his paintings *Johanna Stegen* and *Ulrich von Hutten*.

Franz von Stuck, one of the three "princes of painting of Munich", a title he shared with Franz von Lenbach and Friedrich August von Kaulbach (1850-1920), was also a part of the group. Earlier, he made a name for himself as a gifted sculptor – which rightfully earned him the honour to be called one

of the brightest and most talented artists that Munich could offer. Inspired by the opulent brutality of the baroque painters, by Arnold Böcklin's (1827-1901) usage of intense colours, and by the rigid beauty of ancient sculptures, he developed his very own style of painting. Highly adaptable, he could apply his style strictly or freely to whatever motive he was painting: fantastical scenes, portraits, landscapes, or still-lifes. The grandeur of his style shows itself best in paintings such as *Fangspiel (Faun und Nymphe)* (*Game of Tag – Faun and Nymph*) (c. 1904), *Kampf um eine Frau* (*Fight over a Woman*) (1905), or *Salome* (1906).

Fritz von Uhde, who was the pioneer and trailblazer of the idea of plein air-painting in Munich, was also part of the group. Initially he was more famous for the controversial discussion that he regularly caused with his deeply emotional paintings that propagated a social interpretation of Christianity. Later he caught the attention of Munich's art scene with his masterful solutions for technical composition problems in paintings. Since he approached the problems with a truly religious sentiment, the products were equal parts impressive and sentimental: *Let the Children Come to Me* (1884), *Christ with the Peasants* (1886), *The Last Supper* (1886) and *Holy Night* (1889). Beyond that, he also painted in a way that proved he possessed a keen gift for the observation of nature and the reality around him. Some apt examples are *Bavarian Drummers* (1883), *The Nursery* (1889), *The Picture-Book* (1889), and *Darning* (1890). Since Fritz von Uhde was also exhibiting with the Viennese Secession, Ludwig Hevesi reviewed his work as well:

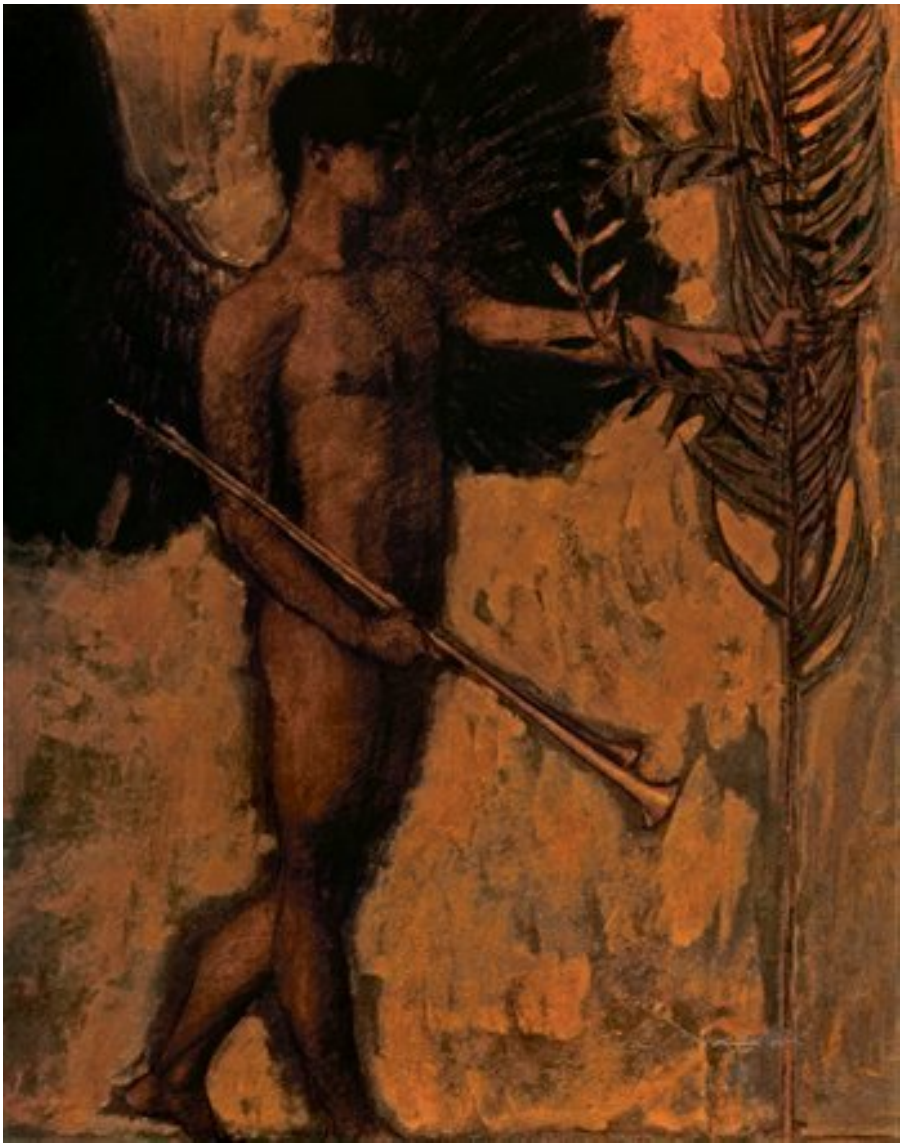
> Fritz von Uhde will also be among the celebrated. His grand *Last Supper* – which is preceded by its reputation from Munich – is one of his main, no, maybe his strongest achievement yet. [...] In any case it is the most important of the master. Uhde returns to the light air of poetry from his beginnings, to those grave yet unspoken emotions which create an impression of the taboo. From this subtle poetry of the imponderable he moves towards tangible greatness [...].

In later years, Uhde got tempted by the example of other artists to start using larger formats for his paintings. At the end of his life, Uhde was creating the most vivid and artistic paintings of his career. Interior scenes and landscapes that showed that he continously evolved in his style and had finally reaced the pinnacle of his mastery of painting. Rightfully he can be called one of the most important artists of the early 20th century.

Other artists that should be mentioned in this enumeration are painter Hans Thoma (1839-1924), Lovis Corinth (1858-1925), the Berlin impressionist Max Liebermann (1847-1935) and Hugo von Habermann (1849-1929), first vice-president, then president of the Secession. Some artists from Berlin joined the Secession in Munich as well, among others, portraitist Reinhold Lepsius, (1857-1922), Max Kruse, husband of the "Queen of Dolls"[4] Käthe Kruse (1854-1942), as well as Walter Leistikow (1865-1908), who later

would create the *Berliner Secession.*

Yet, this group could not fulfil all expectations and did not remain a united body. They split into smaller groups several times, the most prominent being the *Neue Secession* from 1913. The Secession in Munich was dissolved in 1938 by the National Socialists during one of their "cultural cleansings".



Franz von Stuck, Poster draft for the
First International Exhibition of Art,
"Homage to painting", at the *Glaspalast* (detail), 1899.
Mixed technique on cardboard.
Museum Villa Stuck, Munich.

Franz von Stuck, *The Sin,* 1893.
Oil on canvas, 95 x 60 cm.
Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

Fritz von Uhde, *Ascension* (drawing), 1897.
Oil on canvas, 94.6 x 62.8 cm.
Bavarian State Painting Collection,
Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

Fritz von Uhde,
Woman, Why Weepest Thou? c. 1880.
Oil on canvas, 108.6 x 80.3 cm.
Charles and Emma Frye Collection,
Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington.

Fritz von Uhde,
The Picture Book I, 1889.
Oil on canvas, 61 x 49.5 cm.
Charles and Emma Frye Collection,
Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington.

Fritz von Uhde,
Nude study, c. 1890-1895.
Oil on canvas, 110.5 x 80 cm.
Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig.

Fritz von Uhde, *Weinendes Mädchen*
(Young Woman Crying), 1893.
Pastel on cardboard, 26 x 20 cm.
Private collection.
Courtesy of Galerie Konrad Bayer, Andechs, Munich.

Berlin

The schism among the Berlin artists goes back to the year 1892, to the scandal surrounding the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863-1944), who came out of artistic no man's land that was Norway. Very early on, he was already able to garner a reputation in Germany and central Europe for being a revolutionary avant-garde artist. Today, his genius is recognised in all of Europe and beyond. His most famous works stem from the years around 1890, which he spent in Paris. In the fall of 1889, he organised a single exhibition of his work in Kristiana (present-day Oslo) which was so successful that he was granted a three-year artist's stipend by the state.

During his time in Paris, he apprenticed with Léon Bonnat (1833-1922). However, it is not in his apprenticeship that he learned the most or found the most inspiration. It was the city itself and the life led by the resident artists that truly awed him. The scene was dominated by Symbolism, a simplified and stylised style that had grown out of the influences of Paul Gauguin and the French Synthetists around Émile Bernard. The essential premise of the movement can be summed up as: "Symbolism – Nature is formed by disposition".

The results of his stay in Paris were the basis for the aforementioned exhibition in Kristiana. Apart from the state support, the exhibition also led to an invitation to Berlin, where all things Nordic were extremely popular at the time. Munch was invited to exhibit his work in the buildings of the oldest German association of artists, the *Verein Berliner Künstler*, founded in 1841. Since the president of the association maintained a close relation with the Imperial court, Munch may have hoped to find an influential sponsor in Berlin. Since Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941) was quite vocal in matters of art and above all valued historical paintings; modern art or anything tending towards a more modern conception of art simply did not exist. This is quite evident when one considers that he commissioned 32 monumental and epic sculptures to be erected along the Siegesallee to honour and represent the history of Prussia. Consequently, he and other visitors of the exhibition were shocked and offended by Munch's paintings. Some of the older and more established painters even took the paintings as anarchist provocation. Heated discussions ensued and the exhibition was subsequently closed. The scandal dominated the headlines of newspapers for weeks but proved to be excellent publicity for Munch.

The department that exhibited his paintings did not survive the scandal and the public disapproval for long – after a week it was closed. On top of that, other Norwegian painters retracted their works since they felt belittled by the enormous attention that their fellow countryman received. Munch's fame, however, rose, to heights he was maybe not entirely comfortable with. He had many supporters among the younger artists, who soon started gathering similar-minded people and progressive authors like August Strindberg (1849-1912), the Polish author Stanislaw Przybyszewski (1868-1927) who wrote mainly in German, or art critic Julius Meier-Graefe (1867-1935) – one of Munch's more outspoken advocates – around them.

This unusual group of friends met regularly in a pub called *Zum Schwarzen Ferkel* (The Black Piglet) and fittingly named itself "piglet's circle". Among this group was also Dagny Juel (1867-1901), the future wife of Przybyszewski, whom the other members lovingly called "Ducha". However, her seductive appearance and animalistic allure did not only captivate Munch, but many other men as well. Ultimately, her presence led to friction and even arguments between the individual members which, interestingly, did not lead to a complete break-up but rather, combined with the scandal of Munch's

exhibition, to the foundation of the Berlin Secession.

Walter Leistikow, *Aus dem Grunewald*
(From the Grunewald Forest), c. 1907.
Oil on canvas, 75 x 100 cm.
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

Max Slevogt, *Flowering Cherry Trees in Neukastel,* 1898.
Oil on canvas, 70.2 x 100.6 cm.
Saarland Cultural Heritage Foundation,
Saarlandmuseum, Saarbrücken.

Ludwig von Hofmann, *Idyll*, 1896.
Oil on linen canvas, 111.5 x 109 cm.
Sander Collection, Berlin.

Artists of the Berlin Secession

Three artists, who were enormously popular and had many imitators in 19th century Berlin, need to be addressed first: Ludwig Hoffman (1861-1945), Walter Leistikow (1865-1908), and Max Liebermann (1847-1935). Ludwig Hofmann was both a painter and a designer. His personality and passion for French art gave him the tools to render his art with a truly unique character. The world he shows us in his paintings with visually poetic eloquence is detached from all insufficiencies of life. His figures don't belong to a specific period or era; they are always young, beautiful and innocent. They bathe, exult, rest, play, or dance. Hoffmann's paintings are like shallow, pleasant dreams. Certainly, they don't move the soul deeply, but stroke it tenderly, like

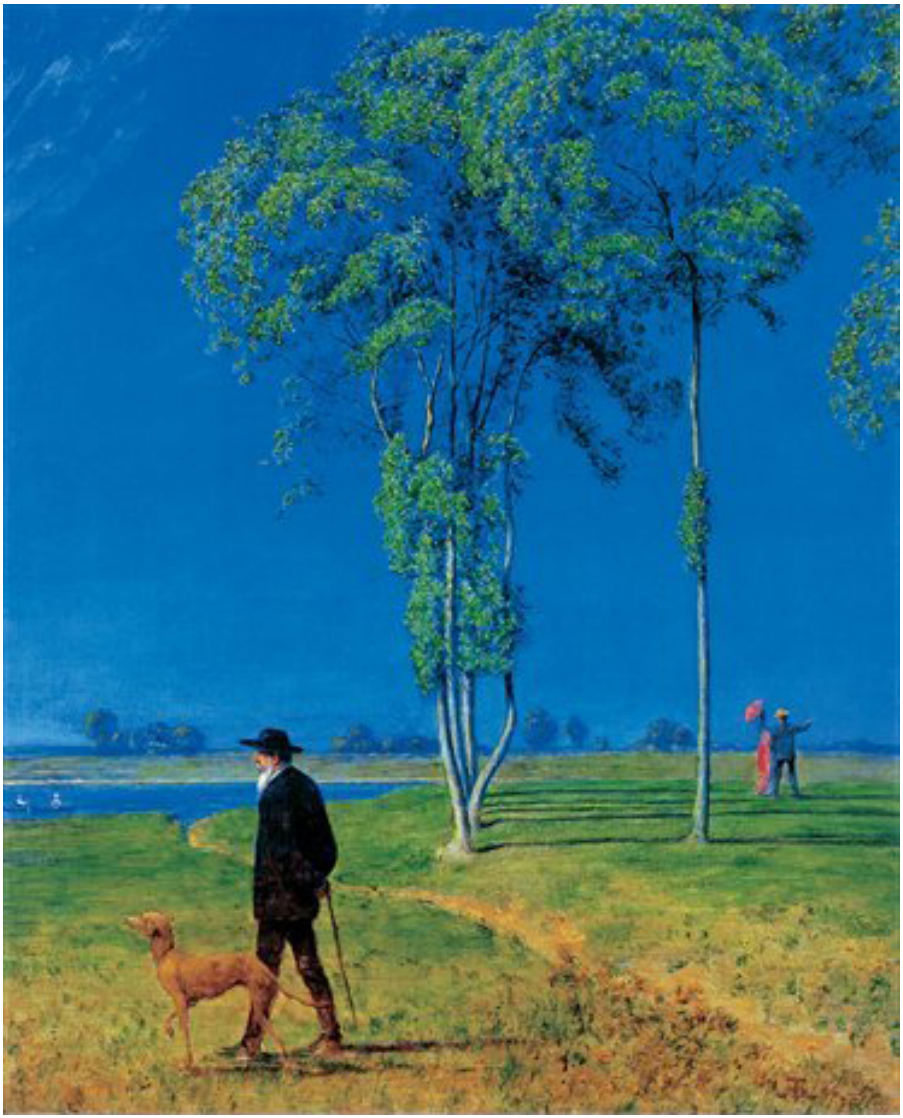
music. Nevertheless, they are delightful to behold and a fitting adornment for every monumental room.

A kindred spirit to Ludwig Hofmann is landscape painter Walter Leistikow, who similarly used influences from a specific school of painting – in his case, the Old Dutch masters – to create distinct style of his own. Characterised by a tranquil atmosphere, few muted colours and strong, big shapes, his paintings depicted the melancholic nature of the March of Brandenburg or the endless pastures of the Danish landscape. He, like no other painter before him – with the exception of Karl Blechen (1798-1840), maybe – made the austere beauty of the dark seas and the acheronian forests of the Berlin environs accessible to a larger audience.

Max Liebermann could be the legitimate successor of famous painter Adolph Menzel (1815-1905), whose style is apparent in many of Liebermann's paintings and drawings. Menzel is counted among the most important artists of German impressionism – if not the most important artist – having drawn inspiration from the old Master Rembrandt and from his contemporary Jean-François Millet, and thus having created an oeuvre that shows obvious nods to the two great artists but is, nevertheless, a coherent and individual achievement in itself.

Liebermann's first painting, *Gänserupferinnen* (*Women Plucking Geese*) (1872), caught the eye of the public and caused general indignation among Berlin's art critics and enthusiasts, who considered the subject either too mundane or too "dirty". Liebermann, however, continued in the same vein and painted *Konservenmacherinnen* (*Women Crafting Tin Cans*) (1872) and *Arbeiter im Rübenfeld* (*Workers Harvesting Turnips on the Field*) (c. 1874). He was also amongst the first German painters to head for the Netherlands in order to study certain overlooked artists like Frans Hals (1580/85-1666), and to capture the unique atmosphere of the country. Initially he focused on specifically "Dutch" motives, as in the paintings *Men's Retirement Home in Amsterdam* (1882), *Schusterwerkstatt* (*Cobbler's Workshop*) (1881), or *Freistunde im Waisenhaus in Amsterdam* (*Free Period In An Orphanage In Amsterdam*) (1881/1882), while later it was the Dutch coast and its unique light and air that captivated his artistic spirit. *Women Mending Nets* (1889) and *Frau mit den Ziegen* (*Woman with Goats*) (1890) were both created during that time.

Already by 1892, Max Liebermann and Walter Leistikow had created the *Vereinigung der XI* (Association of The Eleven) and were presiding over the group, which – true to its name – was a group of exactly eleven artists. After the foundation of the Berlin Secession on 2 May 1898, they, being experienced leaders, took over the direction of the newly-found group, too.



Hans Thoma, *Solitude*, 1906.
Oil on canvas, 82 x 67 cm.
Landesbank Baden-Württemberg Collection.

Max Liebermann,
Country House in Hilversum, 1901.
Oil on canvas, 65 x 80 cm.
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

Walter Leistikow, *Waldstück mit Sandgrube (Corner of Forest with Sand Pit),* c. 1905.
Oil on canvas, 30 x 50 cm.
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

Other members of the group were Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), Heinrich Rudolf Zille (1858-1929), Lovis Corinth (1858-1925) and Max Slevogt (1868-1932). Kollwitz worked as sculptor and designer, creating impressive works that were a testimony to her sensitivity and passion for the social problems of the city. She was born and lived in Konigsberg (modern-day Kaliningrad) where she joined the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts and remained a member of the board of professors until the National Socialists deemed her "unacceptable" and removed her from her position as teacher. Her artworks, which could easily be classified as Realism, were dedicated to neglected social topics. The most important of those works are the etching cycles *Revolt of the Weavers* (1897-1898), *The Peasants' Revolt* (1903-1908), and a series of woodcuts entitled *Der Krieg* (*War*) (1922/1923). Shortly before the end of the Second World War, she died in the ruins of the nearly destroyed city of Dresden.

Painter, illustrator, and photographer Heinrich Zille, who carried his Berlin nickname "Pinselheinrich" (Paint-Brush-Heinrich) proudly, was a similarly dedicated critic of the low social conditions that plagued the less privileged classes with his precise depictions of the Berlin slums and housing projects drawing attention to their plight. Soon after, the residents of Berlin started calling these parts of the town "Zille's Milieu" because of the frequent treatment he gave the issue. Zille was a prolific artist who showcased his work in different and creative ways: in satirical magazines such as *Simplicissimus*

and *Ulk*, on the walls of beer taverns or published in artistic portfolios called *Mutter Erde* (*Mother Earth*) (1905) and *Zwölf Künstlerdrucke* (*Twelve Artistic Prints*) (1909). His smooth charcoal and crayon-drawings garnered such fame that composer Willi Kollo (1904-1988) and songwriter Hans Pflanzer wrote a song that was later popularised through the interpretations by German chanson singer Claire Waldoff, and later Hildegard Knef. The famous chorus was a homage to Zille's favourite topic and his familiarity with the "scene":

That was in Berlin
That was in Berlin.
Every pub and distillery
Knows good father Zille.
Every coach horse
Heard him.
From N.O. to S.W.D. -
That was in Berlin [English translation]

Franz von Stuck, Poster for the
First International Exhibition of the Association
of Visual Artists of Munich (Secession), 1893.
Coloured lithograph.
Museum Villa Stuck, Munich.

Through Max Liebermann's introduction he joined the Berlin Secession, where he quickly made friends with the other artists, especially Käthe Kollwitz.

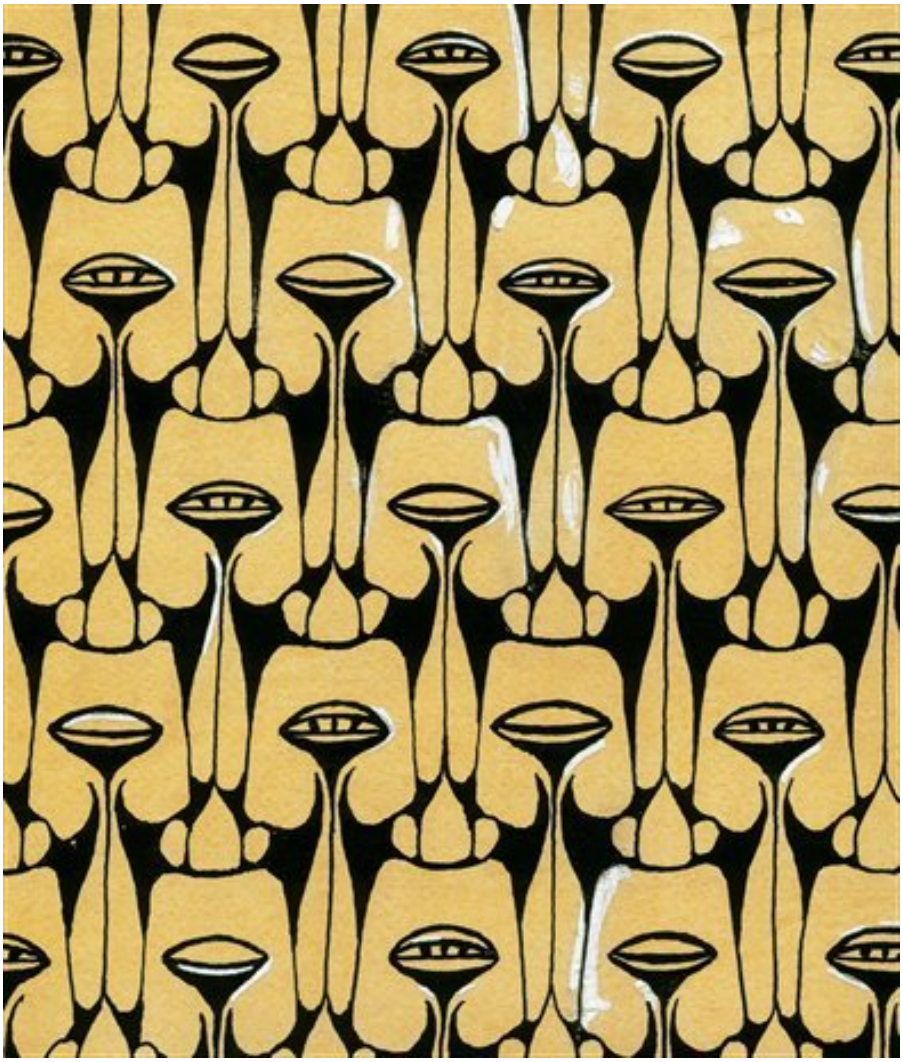
Another member from the first Generation of Secession artists was Lovis Corinth, who started his study of the fine arts with genre painter Otto Günther (1838-1884) in Königsberg. Four years after he had started his apprenticeship with Günther he moved to Munich. After serving in the military for a year he lived in Antwerp for a short time before moving to Paris in order to attend the *Académie Julian*. However the city could not satisfy his restlessness for long. He returned first to Königsberg, moved to Berlin in 1888 and three years later to Munich, where he joined the Munich Secession. Later, he left Munich

again when his *Salomé* was refused for exhibition by a jury of Secession artists. Biblical and mythological themes were the main focus of his works: for example, *Home-coming Bacchants* (1895), *Kreuzabnahme* (*Deposition from the Cross*) (1895), *Crucifixion* (1897/1898), *Salomé* (1900), and *Der geblendete Simson* (*The Blinded Samson*) (1912). Furthermore, he painted excellent nude studies, intimate portraits, scenes from daily life, and still-lifes. All of his works reveal an unusal amount of creative energy that truly marked Lovis Corinth as an awe-inspiring artist.

Max Slevogt was another artist who first participated in the Munich Secession before moving to Berlin. With his paintings and spirited concept of art he rebelled against the traditional academic concept of beauty. Thus, his early paintings, *Scheherazade* (1897) – which he exhibited during the Paris World Fair in 1900 – and the triptych *The Prodigal Son* (1898/1899) were rather dark, despite the originality of his colour palette. A few years later, he came into contact with French Impressionists and the art of Max Liebermann, which inspired him to brighten his colour palette and paintings. This led to Slevogt developing a pastose style of painting that made him one of the creative vanguards in the field of Impressionism. One of the most impressive works of German art is Slevogt's depiction of the singer Francisco d'Andrade, with whom he had struck up a friendship, in *Francisco d'Andrade as Don Giovanni* (1912). He even had great success as a desiger and illustrator with his illustrations for mythological and fairy-tale books like *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (*1902/1903), *Leather Stocking Tales* (1908/1909) and *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1922).

These were the "rebels" of the first two important Secession-movements in 19th century Germany. Other cities would eventually follow. In Darmstadt, Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig von Hessen tried to elevate "his" city out of the artistic provinciality that gripped it at that time with a grand exhibition in the founding year of the Secession. In Leipzig, the city in which Viennese architect Joseph Maria Olbrich (1867-1908) left his mark with impressive Art Nouveau-buildings, a lot of young architects followed the footprints of their colleagues from Munich and Berlin and rebelled against the old academic art scene.

Ludwig von Hofmann,
Poster for the First Exhibition
of the Berliner Secession, 1899.
Coloured lithograph.
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.



Koloman Moser, Pattern for the cover
of *Ver Sacrum* (detail), 1899.
Collection and Archive,
Universität für angewandte Kunst, Vienna.

THE VIENNESE SECESSION

Vienna at the Turn of the Century

The two decades between 1885 and 1918 were a turbulent time of social and cultural paradigm shifts for Vienna, capital of a multi-ethnic empire on the verge of losing the pomp and glory of the 19th century. However, the creation of the Viennese Secession and the *Wiener Werkstätte* (Viennese Workshops) marked a leap into the modern age, at least culturally.

In 1861, the local artists had already joined the *Genossenenschaft der bildenden Künstler Wiens* (Association of Fine Artists in Vienna) and found a home in the *Künstlerhaus*, a renaissance-style building designed by August Weber (1836-1903), that was situated directly at the main boulevard in Vienna. However, the building soon outgrew its initial conception and several additions had to be made: two wings in 1882 and a roof for the atrium in 1888. Nowadays the building houses several cultural venues, a cinema and theatre in the wings, as well as a modern Internet café. In the course of the 20th century it was on the verge of being demolished several times, but, nevertheless, survived and thrived and is today, thanks to a multitude of varying exhibitions, livelier than ever.

In the 19th century, the construction of the *Künstlerhaus* was just one of the many construction projects that were simultaneously commissioned and led to an economic upsurge in the city. Due to the high influx of unemployed workers and farmers from Bohemia and Moravia, another urban expansion (the first one was initiated in 1850) became necessary. This made Vienna the fourth-largest city in Europe with 800.000 inhabitants after London, Paris and Berlin. In the course of ten years the number of inhabitants doubled until it reached 2.000.000 in 1910, making Vienna the fourth-largest city in the world after New York, London, and Paris. For that reason, the urban expansion in the 1890s not only incorporated smaller boroughs surrounding Paris but also included the construction of new districts and the subterranean diversion of the Vienna River. Already in 1897, the first electrical tram line was made operational, a belated successor to the Viennese horse-powered tram which was ferrying people from between 1840 and 1841 – long before Germany or Switzerland would establish a similar transportation system.

All these construction projects required an additional workforce. This led to a huge influx of workers from the eastern realms of the Austro-Hungarian Empire who were given work in the brickworks as unskilled labourers or construction workers. Not all of the immigrants, of whom great percentages were Jews from Eastern-European countries, were able to find work in the

city. Together with sweeping industrialisation, the situation of the working class worsened as more and more craftspeople sank into poverty and thus into a lower social stratum. In turn, the conditions and the rising pressure to compete over jobs led to social tensions between the local population and the newly arrived groups from the same country, as well as to problems within these groups. Some of the immigrant women could find much sought-after work as cooks or as maidservants in the employ of upper-class households. Naturally, those women who were working as cooks brought the culinary influences from their home countries with them, which gave the Viennese cuisine a distinct Czech nuance – surely not to the detriment of the local cuisine, which was already excellent.

Group portrait of the artists of the
Viennese Secession before the opening
of the 14th Exhibition: *Klinger, Beethoven*, 1902.
Back row, left to right: Anton Nowak,
Gustav Klimt (sitting), Adolf Boehm,
Wilhelm List, Maximilian Kurzweil (with cap),
Leopold Stolba, Rudolf Bacher; Front row, left to right:
Koloman Moser (sitting), Maximilian Lemz (lying),
Ernst Stöhr (with hat), Emil Orlik (sitting), Carl Moll (lying).
Photograph by Moriz Mähr, 1902.

In sum, Vienna became a cosmopolitan city and attracted a multitude of artists from all genres. However, the era of the great Viennese classical music that had seen geniuses like Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), the travel-enthusiastic Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), the much celebrated Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), and the crafty Franz Schubert (1797-1828), was drawing to an end. Especially the typically Viennese passion for the Waltz and the Opera, which was shaped by artists like Joseph Lanner (1801-1843), Johann Strauss I (Senior: 1804-1849), Johann Strauss II (Junior: 1825-1899), Oscar Strauss (1870-1954) – not a relative of the famous Strauss family and almost but forgotten today – Karl Millöcker (1842-1899), Franz Lehar (1870-1948), Emmerich Kálmán (1882-1953), or Robert Stolz (1880-1975), was slowly fading. Stolz composed the melody to one of the "most Viennese songs ever", a true homage to the city:

In the Prater blüh'n wieder die Bäume
again
In Sievering grünt schon wieder der
ripening Wein
Here comes the merry month of May
[…]

[loose translation]

The transition from late Romanticism to modernity brought a new wave of contemporary music in its wake that was particularly influenced by Gustav Mahler (1860-1911). Mahler, a close friend of many an artist from the Viennese Secession, was long-standing director of the *Wiener Hofoper* (Court Opera of Vienna), the modern-day Vienna State Opera, and avant-garde conductor who created a new standard for the musical production of operas. Another important figure in Vienna's contemporary music scene was Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951), who – as a true renaissance man – worked not only as a composer but also as a writer, teacher, and painter. In 1903, he settled down in Vienna and paved a new way for future musicians with his revolutionary musical atonality.

The most important poets and writers of that time were, especially, Karl Kraus (1874-1936), a witty literary critic and founder of the magazine *Die Fackel* (*The Torch*), Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929), co-founder of the *Salzburger Festspiele*, and writer Felix Salten (1869-1945). Salten wrote the famous story *Bambi, A Life in the Woods* (1923), which would later gain global fame with Disney's movie adaptation, and is also rumoured to have been the author of fictitious erotic biography *Josephine Mutzenbacher* (1905) which set a precedent when it was removed – despite controversial pornographic content – from the index of age-restricted works after a court ruling, deeming it "both pornography and art". Later, Robert Musil (1880-1942) and Franz Werfel (1890-1945) joined the circle of influential authors in Vienna.

Another important figure that needs to be mentioned in this context is the famous founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who worked as psychiatrist, psychologist, and critic of religion. His fame quickly spread beyond Austria's borders with the publication of his influential book *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

All these names indicate the importance of Vienna as a cultural centre in the middle of Europe during that era. Numerous important characters in the world of culture met, lived, and worked in Vienna.

Gustav Klimt,
Allegory of Sculpture, 1889.
Pencil and watercolour, 44 x 30 cm.
Wien Museum Karlplatz, Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, *The Idyll*, 1884.
Oil on canvas, 50 x 74 cm.
Wien Museum Karlplatz, Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, *Fable*, 1883.
Oil on canvas, 85 x 117 cm.
Wien Museum Karlplatz, Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, *Waiting*, c.1905-1909.
Cardboard for the *Stoclet Frieze*, 193.5 x 115 cm.
Österreichisches Museum, Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, *Accomplishment*, c.1905-1909.
Cardboard for the *Stoclet Frieze*, 194.6 x 120.3 cm.
Österreichisches Museum, Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, Poster for the
First Secession Exhibition, 1898 (before censure).
Lithograph, 63.5 x 46.9 cm.
Neue Galerie, New York.

Gustav Klimt, Poster for the
First Secession Exhibition, 1898 (after censure).
Lithograph, 63.5 x 46.9 cm.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The Künstlerhaus

The Künstlerhaus had not been long in existence when conflicts within the community of artists and art critics slowly started to simmer and boil over. The young artists started opposing the older and more established artists, who had been trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in the conventional historicist style of painting, as well as the academy policy towards exhibitions. People argued, ranted, and demanded a change in the structure of the committee, while the critics sneered and whined and recommended to make the Künstlerhaus a bazaar where the merchants could pitch their wares to the interested. Most people were united in their demand that Austrian art needed

to strike a new path.

One of the critics who was dissatisfied with the situation of art in Vienna was Hermann Bahr, who expressed his "subjective opinion" clearly in December of 1898:

> […] At the moment, several young artists are angry about this and gladly want to defy the conventions, but soon they will have to concede that you simply cannot change the Viennese. One after another has to renounce his hope and make peace with the powers that be if he does not leave in time. It seems indeed that the Viennese cannot be changed at all. At least it is apparently obvious now that all honest attempts of the artist community have been in vain. All efforts by these artists are just mere temporary episodes for the association; they come as crisis but pass again like a short but fervid fever […].
>
> I see no other way for these artists than to come together and rent a few bright rooms somewhere in the city for small, intimate six-week exhibitions. The Viennese need to be shown what is modern and contemporary in European art. In Berlin, they had to overcome the same problems, after all. Whoever wants to stay in the *Künstlerhaus*, can stay there and sell to the Viennese – especially in the time before Christmas – something that best befits their home décor and the wallpaper. This situation makes a Secession, like it happened in Berlin and Munich, unavoidable.

The origin of this problem can be found in the mid-19th century when the Viennese painters exchanged their style from a certain run-of-the-mill style of art which they extracted from their studies of famous Renaissance painters. Only some of these – actually rather reactionary – painters gained certain popularity. These were Carl Rahl (1812-1865; son of copper-engraver Carl Heinrich Rahl) whose style was reminiscient of the Venetian colourists, and Hans Canon (1829-1865), born Johann von Straširipká. Both of them created several painted and decorative works such as a ceiling fresco in the *Naturhistorisches Museum Wien* (Museum of Natural History).

Heinrich von Angeli (1840-1925) was another artist who continued in that vein and garnered a reputation for being an excellent portraitist for the European aristocratic courts and as a talented historic painter. The group was furthermore complemented by portrait painters Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (1793-1865) and Friedrich von Amerling (1803-1887). Waldmüller was an especially popular artist – best known for his Biedermeier-esque child and family portraits – as the memorial in the Vienna town hall square attests.

The single most important painter of that generation was, however, Hans Makart (1840-1884). He is most notable for the contributions he made to the precise depiction of the most difficult motives: fabrics like brightly-coloured robes and draperies, fruit, the glassy nature of marble, the complex surfaces of weapons, as well as ornate and prepossessing goblets. Furthermore, he also

contributed to the ways in which to depict the female body. In 1878, he was given the chair for historical painting at the university. His inclination to creating historical paintings was justified insofar that the events he chose to depict required luxuriant colours. It is for that same reason that painters sought their motives in the past, since that demand could not have been met with the depiction of events from the last quarter of the 19th century.

Koloman Moser, Postcard to
Carl Moll with *Ver Sacrum* sketch, 1897.
Pen and coloured pencil on paper,
9 x 14 cm. Private collection, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, Poster for the
Fifth Secession Exhibition, 1899.
Coloured lithograph on paper,
100 x 69.5 cm. Wien Museum, Vienna.

Thus he unleashed a flurry of colour, grandeur, and beautiful figures, which had once also graced the paintings of the Renaissance era, on his canvases. The results were paintings like *Venedig huldigt Caterina Cornaro* (1873) (*Venice bows to Caterina Cornaro*) or *The Entrance of Emperor Charles V into Antwerp in 1520* (1878). Another aspect of his oeuvre are his portraits, particularly those of beautiful women. Makart excelled in covering deficits in technique by intricate application of colour. The popularity of his paintings increased and soon reproductions of his paintings could be found in the purses of many wealthy "gentlemen", since they did not dare hang them up in their salons either "because of the staff" or "because of the children" or "because of the guests".[5]

His studio was the centre of the Viennese high society for a whole decade; his rambunctious revelries were legendary. He left his mark even on high fashion with his Makart-Hat and Makart-Collar. Makart died young, but was still able to impart some of his influence on Gustav Klimt. At the turn of the century, the admiration for this true master of colour had faded; he represented exactly that style of art that the young generation of painters wanted to be free of.

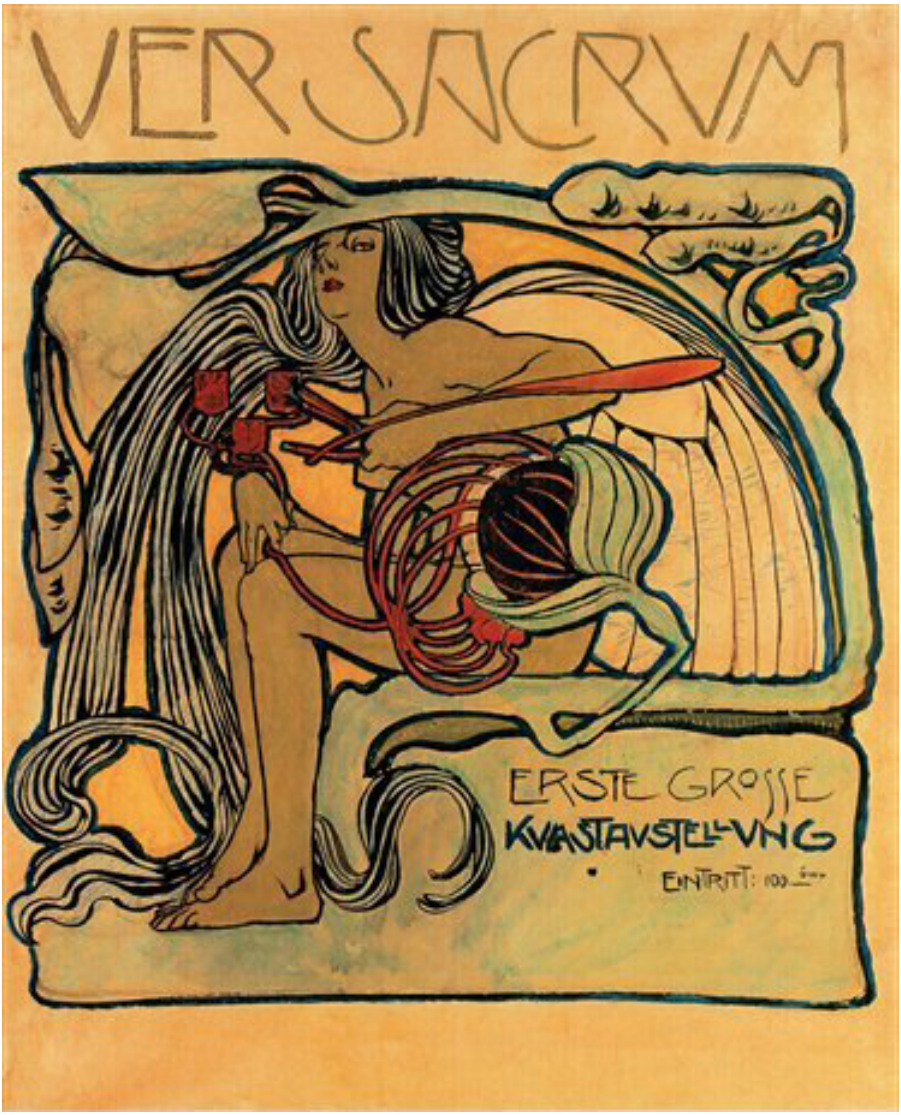
As previously mentioned, the second half of the 19th century was characterised by a plethora of constructional activity in Vienna. In 1857, at the behest of Emperor Franz Joseph, the demolition of the medieval city wall that still surrounded the city centre was initiated. During this period, the *Ringstraßenviertel* was created: a thriving new district of magnificent buildings and beautiful parks, while the essence of regeneration provided Gustav Klimt and his partners with the opportunity to showcase their talent. The first commissions did not take long to follow, and they were asked to contribute artistically to the festivities on the occasion of the silver wedding of Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth. Shortly after that, they painted a ceiling fresco for a spa in Karlsbad. More state commissions followed. A study of Klimt's paintings of that time – like *Fable* (1883) or *The Idyll* (1884) – reveals that, although he was a talented and promising young artist, his art was rooted in the conventional, academic standards for allegorical and mythological themes.

The colours in *The Idyll* are not particularly elegant but still skilfully colour the fabrics of the central figure with her smooth hair. She would neither have been shocking nor inspiring in the 17th or 18th century. Her beauty is rather maternal and matronesque while her nakedness is more decorative than arousing. In the past the pubic region was – if at all – stylised to a smooth, innocent "V". Numerous paintings from early medieval times or the early Renaissance who dared to show or allude to male or female genitalia were later covered with absurd fig leaves by prudish souls.

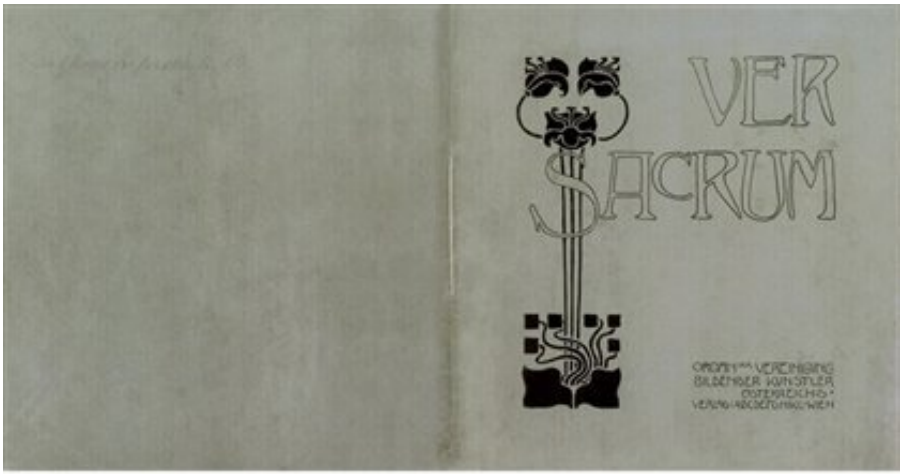
By 1896, Klimt already began painting the human body in a more unconventional and individual manner. For example, there is an interesting

discrepancy between the last study for *Allegory of Sculpture* and the fully realised painting: in the study, the wild and loose hair that would later characterise Klimt's style is already visible and there are traces of a more detailed depiction of pubic hair. The woman is looking directly at the viewer and strikes a provocative pose, as if she was caught naked in her bedroom. The painting, on the contrary, shows a traditional figure again: her pose is classically sculpture-like, her hair is braided and the pubic hair is gone.

All the early commissions made Klimt a successful and popular artist. In 1892, Klimt's father died, shortly followed by his brother Ernst (1864-1892). In that difficult time, the relationship between Klimt and his co-student Franz Matsch (1861-1942), with whom he and his brother Ernst had founded the *Künstler-Compagnie*, cooled off. These events deeply impacted Klimt and he began to forge new and more adventurous paths.



Koloman Moser, Poster design for the
"First Grand Art Exhibition" of the
Viennese Secession, 1897.
Watercolour, gouache, coloured pencil,
metal colour on tracing linen, 78.5 x 60.5 cm.
Leopold Museum, Vienna.



Koloman Moser, Drafts for the
first issue of *Ver Sacrum*, 1897.
Pencil, coloured chalk, ink and watercolour on paper,
30.7 x 30 cm each. Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, Drafts for the
first issue of *Ver Sacrum*, 1897.
Pencil, coloured chalk, ink and
watercolour on paper, 30.7 x 30 cm each.
Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Joseph Maria Olbrich,
Cover of *Ver Sacrum*, vol. 2, no 1, 1898.
Letterpress printing, 29.5 x 29 cm.
Photograph by Heinz Hefele, Darmstadt.
Private collection.

The Secession I

> *"We want art that is not a slave to foreign influences but at the same time is neither afraid nor hateful of them"*
> Hermann Bahr, Vienna

Art critic Ludwig Hevesi also commented on the foundation of the Viennese Secession and the events which surrounded the artistic community of Vienna:

> […] The city council has, in recent days, in a moment of epiphany, made the decision to grant the *Vereinigung bildender*

Künstler Österreichs (Association of Visual Artists in Austria) a piece of property for the construction of an art exhibition centre on the corner of the Wollzeile in Vienna. The conditions, however, for this grant still need mitigation. This is what the Viennese would call a "*Wiener Lokalnachricht*" (a local headline) but compared to all the other headlines that have been published in the papers over the last years, this announcement is of tremendous importance. A magic word has been spoken which shall break the chains and raise the dead from their graves: an urban expansion is on the horizon that shall rejuvenate Vienna's art scene. As a city of the arts, Vienna, this formidable little town shall finally become Great Vienna, truly a New Vienna. The citizens of Vienna themselves are going to be surprised by the news since all the conspirators behind this project have been untiringly working in deepest silence in their metaphorical mountain retreat. The time of planning is finally over; today action speaks louder than words, for this courageous venture is already secured, both artistically and financially, at least for the next decade. It was a group of young artists with strong and fresh blood running through their veins whose determination set this movement in motion; it is the most consistent movement in Vienna ever since the fiery temperament and genius of Hans Makart set the world of art on fire.

Joseph Maria Olbrich,
Vignette in *Ver Sacrum*, vol. 2, no 1, p. 20, 1898.
Letterpress printing, 3 x 2.6 cm.
Photograph by Heinz Hefele, Darmstadt.
Private collection.

Apart from the previously mentioned Gustav Klimt and Franz Matsch, many other artists participated in the beginning of the movement: Wilhelm List (1864-1918), Carl Moll (1861-1945), Ernst Stöhr (1860-1917), Max Kurzweil (1867-1916), Koloman Moser (1868-1918), and Josef Engelhart (1864-1941). This core group essentially founded the Viennese Secession after a coffee house meeting. Later, the architects Josef Hoffmann (1831-1904), who was also one of the co-founders of the *Wiener Werkstätte*, and Josef Maria Olbrich joined the illustrious group as well. Gustav Klimt, barely aged 35, took up the presidency.

On 30 May 1897, Ludwig Hevesi also commented on the schism that occurred with artists who remained part of the *Künstlerhaus*:

> […] Unfortunately the majority has committed a grave injustice through the excessive application of reprimands. Everyone's sympathy is with the young artists who are involuntarily going into voluntary exile. Well, thank God they are not martyrs. The new association hopefully will soon be able to dedicate themselves to their heart's desire and the public will soon see reason and support them. But in the *Künstlerhaus* the victory songs will cease and be replaced by wailing and gnashing of teeth. We wish them that this realisation will strike them today rather than tomorrow. Despite everything, a few reasonable men might still be able to mend the bloody fracture between the artists. It can be so easy: Live and let live! […]

He commented further that,

> […] a few conditions need to be fulfilled in order for the association to reform as a whole body. They would need artistic leadership, the omnipotence of certain close-knit groups needs to be broken, friendships that have been struck up over a game of pool should not be allowed to influence important artistic decisions and bunglers should not able to outvote and outtalk hard-working artists. If there are not any men who possess the strength to effect these changes, Vienna will see two different Austrian art associations. A community of artists that does not concern itself purely with art is doomed from the start. It is left to hope that our artists are also able to hold emergency general meetings for things that are relevant […].

Koloman Moser,
Tanzende Mädchen/Dancing girls,
cover design of *Ver Sacrum*, vol. 1, no 2,
1898 (Founders' Edition).
Letterpress in metallic blue on red,
30 x 29 x 0.5 cm.Private collection, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, *Mädchenkopf* (*Head of a Girl*),
cover design of *Ver Sacrum*, vol. 2, no 4, 1899.
China ink on cardboard, 41 x 41 cm.
Wien Museum, Vienna.

The *Ver Sacrum* Magazine

The Viennese Secession soon had its own statutes but more importantly a mouth-piece with the magazine *Ver Sacrum* (Latin for "sacred spring") that took its name possibly from either one of these two sources: Some art historians think that it was inspired by an old Roman ritual, dedicated to their gods, meant to celebrate the foundation of a new township while others assume that the name was borrowed from Ludwig Uhland's (1781-1862) poem *Der Weihefrühling* (*The Sacred Spring*). Artists from the Secession contributed to the magazine along with popular local writers and other foreign artists.

The magazine, under the directorship of Wilhelm List, had a print run of five years (1898-1903) and had a limited publication of 300 copies per issue. In the first two years the magazine was published monthly, then bi-monthly in 1901. One of the most prolific contributors was Klimt, who regularly wrote articles for *Ver Sacrum.* The publication was highly regarded – from a literary and artistic point of view – and had a high influence on Austrian and foreign artists.

Ludwig Hevesi wrote, celebrating the first issue of *Ver Sacrum*:

> […] the year is still young and the first issue of *Ver Sacrum*, the central organ of the "Association of Fine Artists of Austria", has already been published. For a long time the magazine was the talk of the day and its appearance was highly anticipated by some and dreaded by others. That often goes hand in hand. Art is renewed through the periodically occurring phenomenon of the spring fights. To live in such a time of such rejuvenating figures is much more beautiful than to live in an epoch that is essentially dead and done with itself. One listens and observes and attempts to guess what all of this will amount to – if it will amount to anything at all.
>
> Well, in the last decade the dye has been cast everywhere, ultimately also in Austria. Today there is no doubt left that a new art has come forward. She has borne her first fruit, some of them strange and tartly, but with their very own sweetness or acerbity. In the worst case, they are still harbingers for the approaching summer. In any case they are the fruits of this era – the enemy cannot deny that – and of this soil, no run-of-the-mill tropical fruit like the ones that have recently flooded the whole world as mass import.
>
> A glance of the firstborn issue of this new art magazine reveals – even before one has to start to leaf through the pages – that the artist knows what he wants. Already the format is telling; these people do not want you to be forced to turn the whole

> magazine only to be able to marvel at the occasional landscape format picture. The canvas-like quality of the cover, the light ochre-shade of the background, the atmospheric red colour print and the singular effect that both elements combined create together; add the mastery of how image and font, negative and positive space are combined – the reader has to believe us that such a cover is a work of art that does not appear every day. Whatever is left to say, victory has been secured by this magazine. Alfred Roller, who created the cover, has rendered outstanding services to his comrades. Even his symbolic cover image is truly excellent: the strong fruit tree with roots breaking free of the stanchions to stretch themselves heavenwards towards the dear Lord God […].

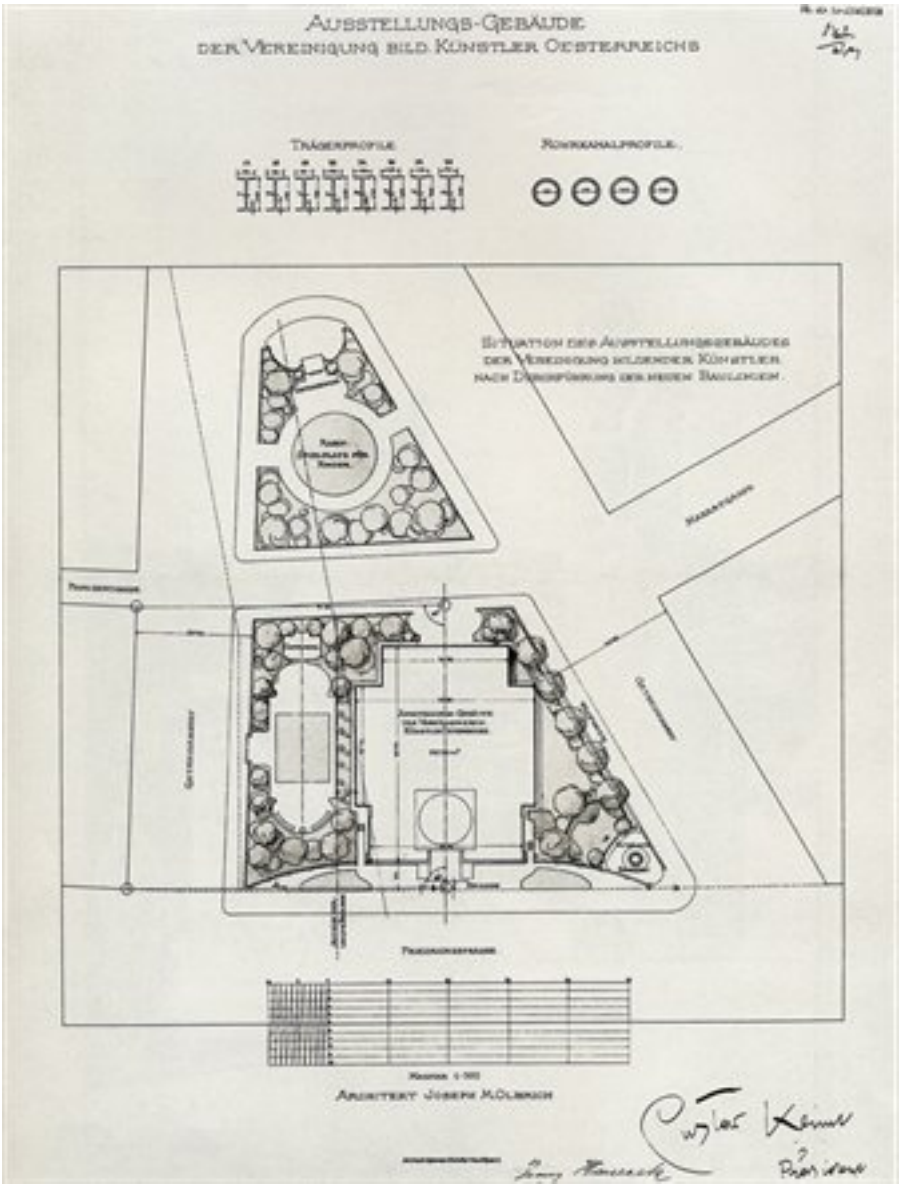
Hevesi could not be stopped in his criticism of old conditions and his passion for the new movement, because he continued to write:

> […] of course, *Ver Sacrum* is only a start. But it is a good start. Our audience, which surely is not yet well-versed in its understanding of modern literature, can learn quite a few things from this magazine. Especially what an artistically well-illustrated text page looks like, how image and text work together to create a living organism – even if it only lives in the confines of a limited page-space. Recently, one could even find vain dilettantism in the grand works for our Christmas market.

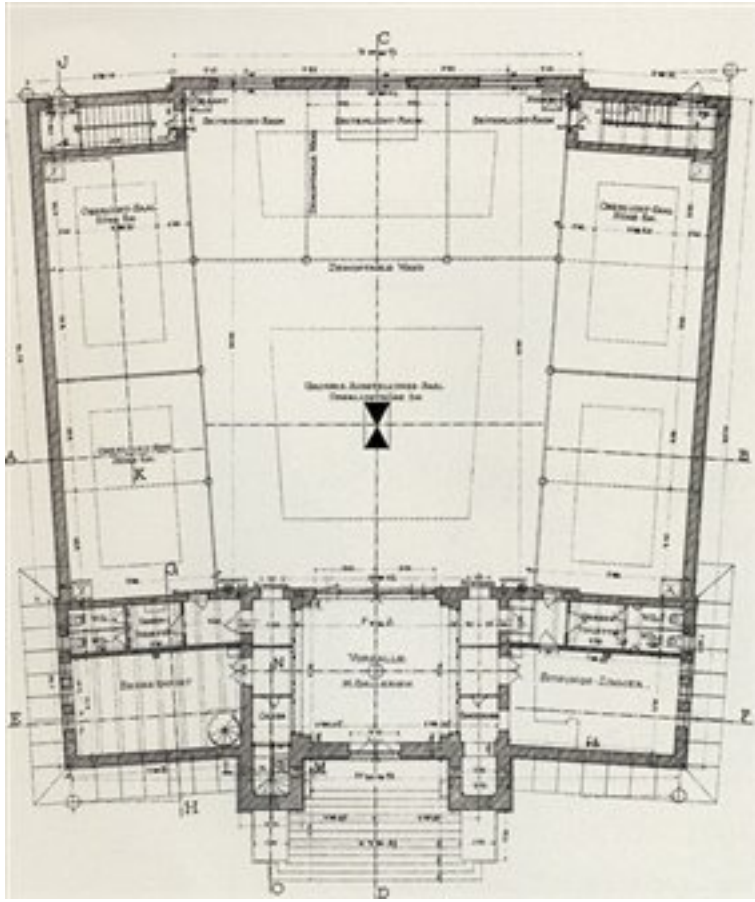
Koloman Moser, Vignettes for the catalogue
of the First Secession Exhibition, 1898.
China ink on paper, 10 x 10 cm each.
Wien Museum, Vienna.

Joseph Maria Olbrich, Draft for the exhibition building of the Viennese Secession, perspective, 1897. Pencil, charcoal, coloured pencil and opaque colour on light brown drawing board, 44.9 x 29.9 cm. Library of Art, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin. Photograph by Dietmar Katz.

Joseph Maria Olbrich,
Draft for the exhibition building of the
Viennese Secession, perspective, 1897.
Pen on translucent paper, 29.6 x 18.9 cm.
Library of Art, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.
Photograph by Dietmar Katz.



Joseph Maria Olbrich,
Site plan of the exhibition building
of the Viennese Secession, 1898.
Coloured print, 64 x 45 cm.
Secession Hall, Vienna.



Joseph Maria Olbrich,
Exhibition building of the Viennese Secession,
final modified draft, ground plan, 1898.
Print, 56 x 42 cm. Secession Hall, Vienna.

Modern book decoration thus appears for the first time in a magazine with the conscious knowledge of being an integral part – not simply padding. There are a few pages which have been exemplarily designed with rich artistry by the gifted Kolo[man] Moser, the architects Josef Hoffmann and M. Olbrich, then Alfred Roller, Leo Kainradl, the landscape artist from Bohemia, and finally – new on stage as humourist – Rudolf Bacher. The only remaining criticism might be that they have been too wasteful at some points and that some of the better designed filler images have been scaled down too much.

Since it is finally allowed again to deviate from the school

guidelines and to have good ideas, these things won't get boring easily. In the past one could always find the same decorative borders and decorative letters in all of the various illustrated works of certain publishers, which led one to simply disregard these old acquaintances completely. Now every image is like a new friend. And everything is allowed to be a picture, even the charming "three pots for flowers" images, which have been borrowed from the good Japanese. Generally, this artistic way of illustration has been done for barely two years.

In the same article, Hevesi continued reviewing the illustrations of the first issue of *Ver Sacrum*, among them one which had been painted by Rudolf Bacher:

> We have to be thankful that Rudolf Bacher painted the venerated patriarch, whose well-known title "old master" makes him almost seem young, in such lively fashion. In the picture, well-placed headlining the biographical essay, he is sitting at an ancient table, working on an ancient drawing board, a watercolour-glass and a mighty flintstone lying beside him […] between the flower pots on the window, Viennese autumn-light is falling into the room and suffuses the homely scene in a shade of light that could have been produced with a silver pen; a shade that Albrecht Dürer liked to produce.
>
> On a side-note, two droll fiends that he placed on two textpages of the magazine; the readership does not even know that this young painter, who always appears so serious in public, is a deft hand at drawing and likes to paint antediluvian monsters for pure fun and already has created a whole collection of drawings.

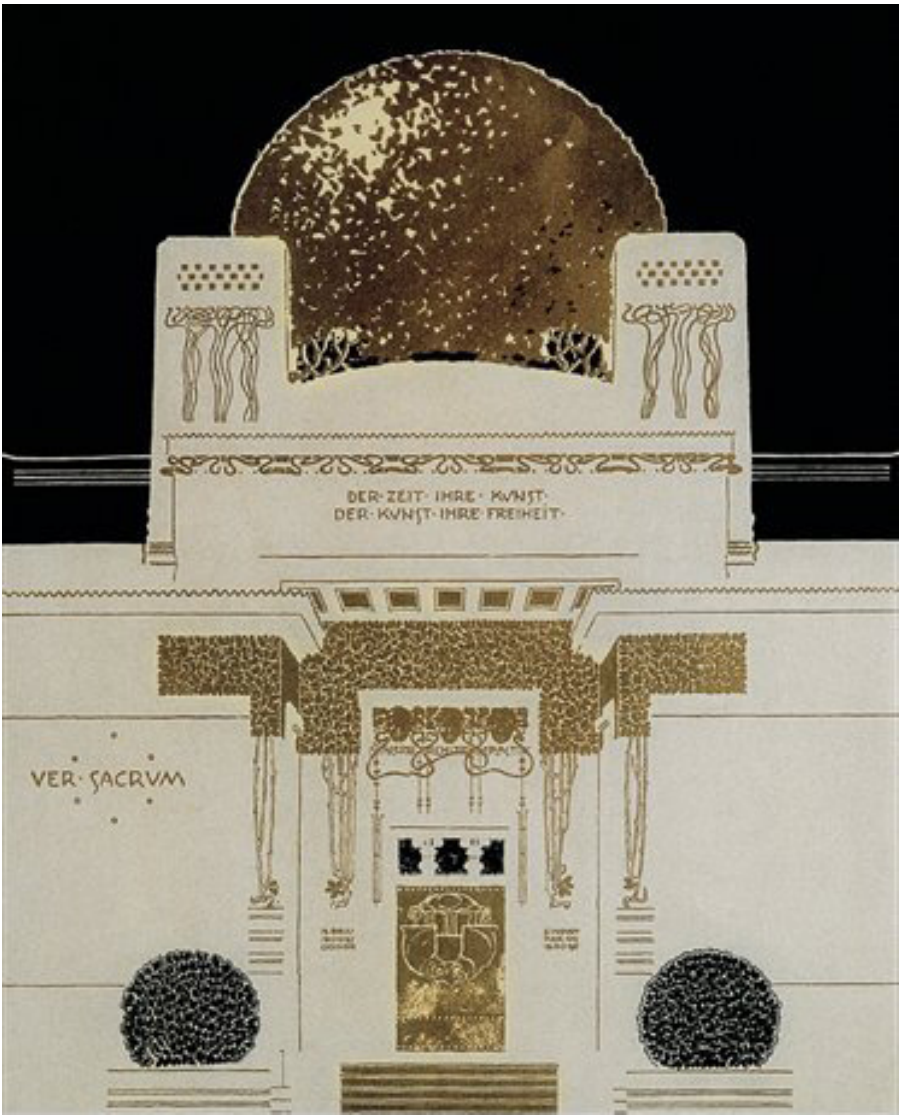
In his expressive language Hevesi continues the review:

> […] the laudable leaders of our young artists did not give any reason for reprimand. Reprimanded they still were. What did people not argue about Engelhart's female nude on page one. Some did not like her profile while others thought she was too slim, a third party thought she was so… so… At this point a slew of different philistine words were uttered. Well, the most important aspect is the extraordinary honesty which Engelhart invested in this ruthless thing and the precise hand which captures the slightest movement of line and light. The drawing has true *quattrocento*-character. Some critics considered the last vignette in the magazine showing the editor-in-chief putting on his frock overcoat – very true to life – as mitigating circumstances for some of other content. At long last, there are finally pieces of clothing again. The two colour-pages in the book baffled a lot of readers and critics. Although Kolo [man]

Moser simply called the central image "a decorative blotch in red and green", it still warrants further analysis of whether these two colours work together in their distribution. They are a pure arabesque, however not a geometrically shaped one but rather a naturally occurring one like we can find all around us. In the past such artistic inspiration was vastly overlooked, but now – thanks to the good Japanese – recognised by more and more people in these days. It is similar to a piece of wallpaper – if you so choose – with bleached colour impulses that are slowly dying in their own fineness. At least they are setting new standards – that is not unimportant. Of course, the philistine responds: "Wallpaper? Good God. But why does the wallpaper need such a long nose?" Alas, he is simply used to wallpapers with shorter noses […].

Gustav Klimt was also the recipient of a review:

> […] G. Klimt's painting of a dreaming woman in an armchair is suffused in a mellow twilight atmosphere and was received with general sympathy. The opposite is true for his symbolic painting *Wenn zwei dasselbe tun* (*If Two Are Doing the Same Thing*) but nevertheless it is a beautiful idea to contrast the marble head of a Roman, symbolising old art, with the head of woman, full of life, representing modernity […].



Joseph Maria Olbrich, Poster for the
Second Secession Exhibition (detail), 1898.
Lithograph, 86 x 51 cm.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Joseph Maria Olbrich, Exhibition building
of the Viennese Secession, 1898.
Photograph, 1986. Secession Hall, Vienna.

Joseph Maria Olbrich,
Exhibition building of the Viennese Secession,
view of the *Getreidemarkt* (Grain Market), 1898.
Photograph, 1899. Kunstbibliothek - Staatliche
Museen zu Berlin, Berlin. Photograph by Dietmar Katz.

View of the Secession building
from *Gemüsemarkt* (Vegetable Market), 1899.
Wien Museum, Vienna.
Photograph by Friedrich Strauss.

Joseph Maria Olbrich, Exhibition building of the Viennese Secession (detail), 1898.
Photograph, 2000.

Joseph Maria Olbrich, Exhibition building of the Viennese Secession (detail), 1898.
Photograph, 2000.

Hevesi concludes his review of *Ver Sacrum* with the following words:

> All in all, we think that the artistic success of *Ver Sacrum* is irrefutable. The first steps have been taken and it has been proven that such an undertaking can work. More cannot be expected by a first issue – which is usually more of trial – or experimental issue. *Ver Sacrum* has in many ways even surpassed the expectations. Something similar has not been attempted in Vienna and with its success a cloud of suspicion has been dispelled.

Hermann Bahr penned the most important principle of the Secession: "We want art that is not a slave to foreign influences but at the same time is neither afraid nor hateful of them."

Despite all the praise there were also problems with the magazine. One of the issues was confiscated by a district attorney because it "abrasively violated the sense of shame with its depiction of nudity and thus created public outrage". Klimt responded to these charges that he did not want to deal with boorish people and that it was more important to him that there were people who liked the drawing. He was referring to his private patronage, his clients from the ranks of the Viennese upper class.

In the course of five years 70 issues were published, which had a purely didactic role and were often dedicated to one specific topic per issue. For example, one special issue was dedicated to Jan Toorop (1858-1928), whose symbolic picture-language was a great influence on Klimt. Another complete issue was dedicated to Khnopff-reproductions while the November issue of 1899 was an essay written by Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren (1855-1916) about the oeuvre of the Flemish painter Théo van Rysselberghe (1862-1926).

Ver Sacrum propagated the idea of holistic art, which stated that all art needs to form a synthesis and can thus be appreciated by everyone: the poor and the rich, the powerful and the powerless. The content varied between essays about art theory and practical, visual examples. Often the issues contained original prints. The magazine appeared roughly at the same time as another important magazine that was published beyond the Alps, in Munich, and was called *Die Jugend (The Youth).* The Munich magazine marked the beginning of the local *Jugendstil*-movement and was essentially the inspiration for their name.

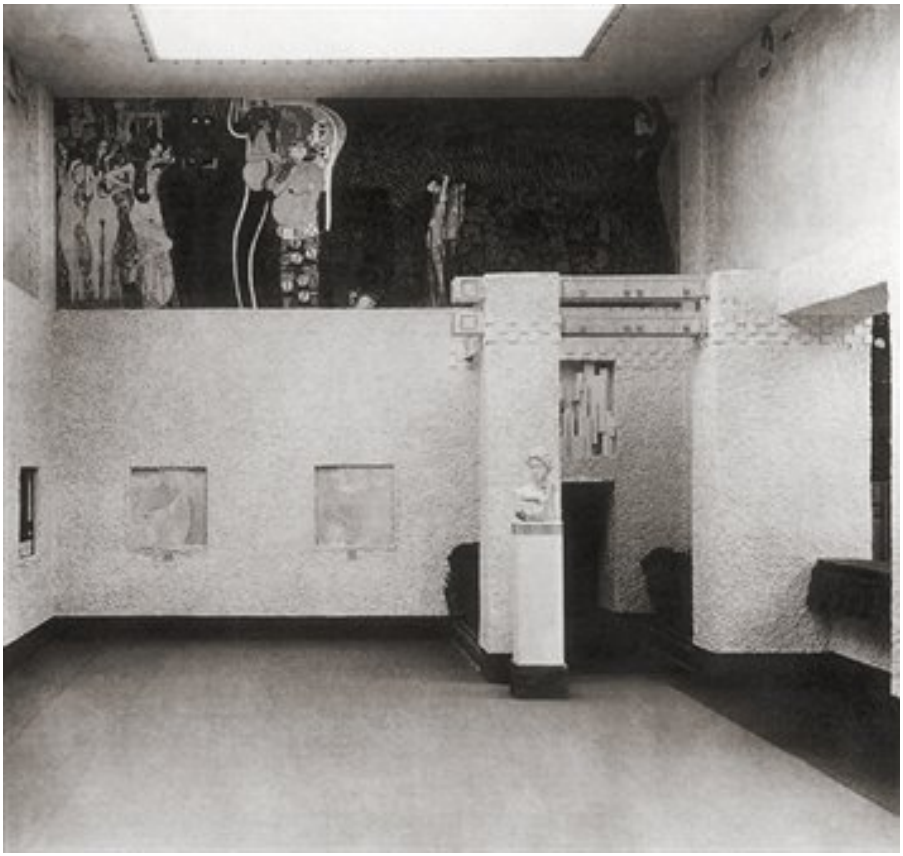
In 1903, *Ver Sacrum* was cancelled and discontinued due to a lack of subscribers.

The Secession II

Let us return to the Secession. The Viennese art critics had already sufficiently pointed out the lack of innovation and strict adherence to conservative role

models. All those conditions simply suggested a move towards *Jugendstil* and Impressionism, which was already in practice in Germany, England, and France. Soon a motto was found as well: “Every era needs its own art and all art needs its freedom.”

Thus, program and mission statement for the movement were set for the forty members who were all already established artists. In practice, their motto could also have been “Art for everyone and for every stratum of society.” During this decade, Vienna was basically obsessed with aesthetics and eroticism. It was an era of happiness, craze and a flurry of intellectual activity. The Secessionists were searching for new artistic expressions, had developed their own ideal of beauty and wanted to steer their movement into a direction that did not require submission to political, economical or financial constraints; in essence, they wanted a “typically Austrian *Jugendstil*”.



The Beethoven Frieze at the 14th
Secession Exhibition: *Klinger, Beethoven*.
Gustav Klimt. Photograph, 1902.

As to satisfy the conditions of etiquette and formality, they drafted a letter of termination to the *Genossenschaft der bildenden Künstler Wiens im Künstlerhaus*:

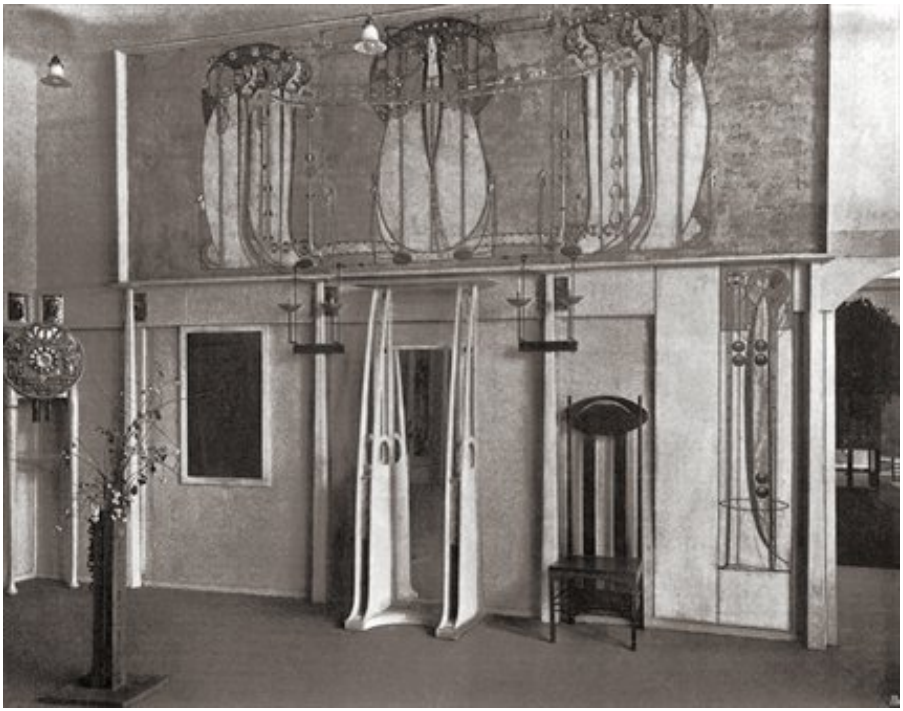
> The board of directors is probably aware that a group of artists within the organisation has been trying to make themselves and their artistic ideas heard for years. These ideas now culminate in the realisation of a necessity: the necessity to establish contact between the artistic scene in Vienna and the ever-progressing art scene outside of Austria. Furthermore exhibitions need to be freed of commercial interests and organised according to purely artistic standards, so that a pure and modern concept of art can be taught to the broader public. Finally, a higher understanding of art needs to be awakened in higher circles.

Klimt, Moll, and Hoffmann were responsible for the organisation of

exhibitions until 1905. This function in the Secession naturally furthered Klimt's reputation, which led to him gaining more influence at the Imperial court, with the government and his colleagues. The Secession was ultimately successful in finding wealthy patrons and securing subsidies for their fledgling association. They received commissions from museums, theatres, and other official institutions. However, first and foremost the founders of the movement had several specific objectives they wanted to accomplish: to help young artists exhibit their work; invite the best foreign artists to Vienna; publish a distinctive and original art magazine; and finally elevate the artistic standard in Vienna to an international level.

For that reason, four non-resident artists were invited into the Secession: Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921) from Belgium, Max Klinger (1857-1920) from Germany, the Swiss artist Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), and Jan Toorop from the Netherlands, who was mentioned earlier.

Gustav Klimt, *The Beethoven Frieze: The Three Gorgons* (central panel, detail), 1902.
Casein on plaster, height: 220 cm.
Secession Hall, Vienna.



Room 10 at the Eighth Secession Exhibition, 1900.
Showing the room setting and furniture
by Margaret and Frances Macdonald,
Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and J. Herbert MacNair
(repoduced in *Dekorative Kunst* 7 [1901]: 175).
Photograph.

The Exhibition Centre of the Viennese Secession

At least the early work of the Secessionists was meant to provoke and cause outrage; an idea they were successful with. Ludwig Hevesi associated the architectural style of the Secession building (pp. 84, 85, 86, 88(1, 2)), with its unusual oriental influences, with "the golden backdrop of medieval times". Vienna's citizens, however, mocked the building and called it "the Temple of the Three Frogs" or "The Tomb of Mahdi" or – even worse – "The Crematorium" and "The Mausoleum". The dome was generally referred to as "the cabbage head". Hermann Bahr spoke quite differently about the building in an article in October 1898:

> […] the building is the new house of the Secession and has been designed by the young architect Olbrich. On the 4th of November it is meant to become municipal. The same day will see the start of its first exhibition. I suspect that there will be a great outcry

and the foolish people will rage. That is why I want to say the most important things right now, while I am calm and dispassionate. Polemics will come later.

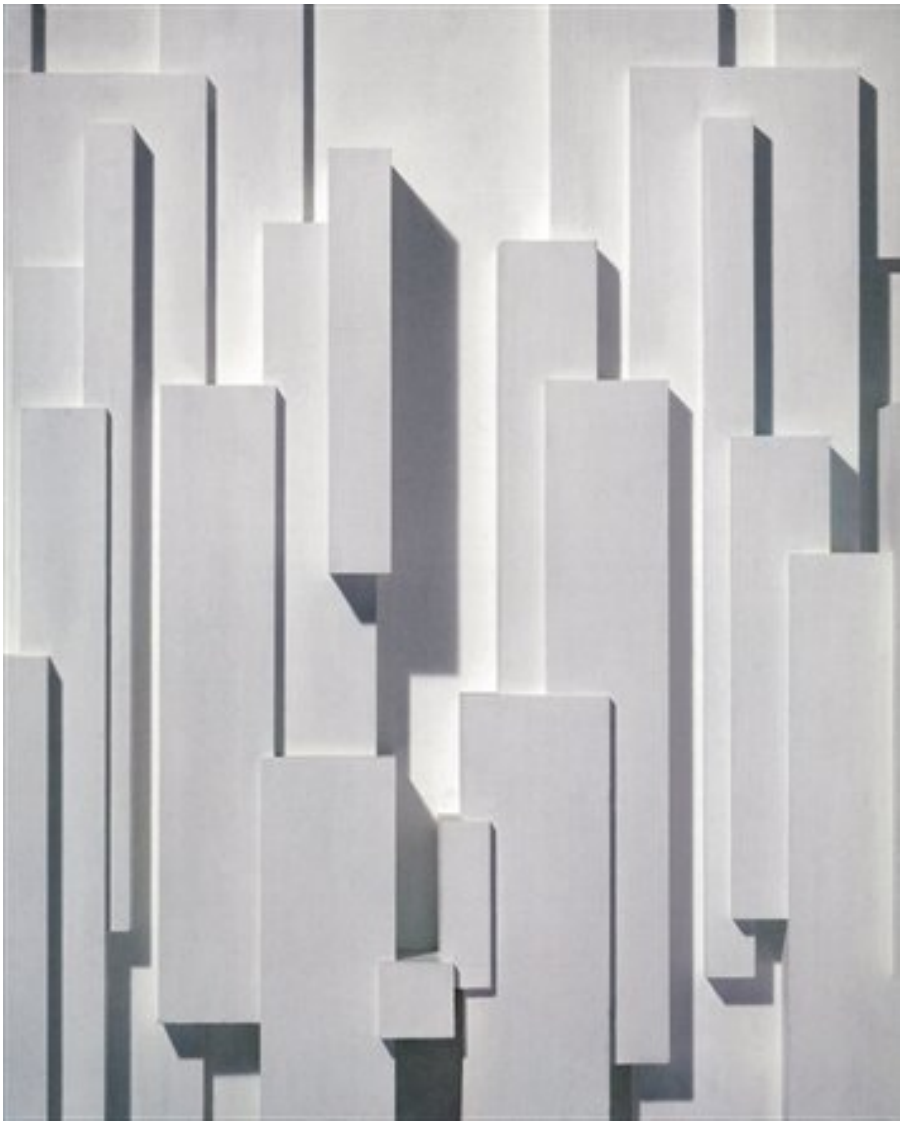
Let us go into the building. First, we enter a room that is meant to put us into a ceremonial mood. Almost like a propylaeum. And that is its sole purpose: it is an atrium where one can cleanse oneself from the mundane, look to the eternal, lay down the worries and vagaries of daily life and prepare for devotion. You could almost call it a silent cloister for the soul.

View towards the middle hall of the
Eighth Secession Exhibition.
Glasses and book covers by **Koloman Moser**
in the showcase. Photograph, 20.4 x 26.7 cm.
Municipal and State Archives of Vienna, Vienna.

After leaving the first room, we enter the building itself. Everything is functional here. There is no frivolous attempt to boast or to blind with pomp. The house of the Secession does not want to be a palace or a temple but rather a room that is able to arrange works of art to best effect possible. The arist did not ask himself "How can I design this so that it looks the most impressive?" but rather "How can this serve its purpose, its new mission, our needs?"

The object has dictated the purpose; as the object wills it, was the sole law of design. It was created the way a wheel is created: with the same precision, geared towards purpose, not concerned about anything else and determined to look for true beauty that unravels in function. As a wheel meets specifications, security through storm and snow, the building also has been designed with utmost wisdom to meet the requirements to efficiently exhibit art. The designer has not forgotten that art is inexorably changing and has planned for the future, for the coming of

applied art that is slowly replacing two-dimensional art. Furthermore, he has planned for the eventuality of sudden change. If necessary, everything can be quickly – as if done by magic – re-arranged to perfectly suit new requirements. Everything has been done with utmost dedication to purpose. Nothing is superfluous, nothing needs to be added, nothing needs to be re-thought; everything is necessary and natural.



Josef Hoffmann, Overdoor relief for the 14th Secession Exhibition: *Klinger, Beethoven* (detail), 1902. Reconstructed by Wilhelm Kopf, 1985. Collection and Archive, Universität für angewandte Kunst, Vienna.

Let us consider the ideals of the Secession for a moment, take into account the resulting requirements and convert them into fixed parameters. The result is, like in a calculation, a certain sum. This sum is what the designer expressed artistically. One cannot say "I like it" or "I don't like it"; this is not about preference or non-preference but a matter of right or wrong. The accomplishment of our young architect is to have seen the truth, and the way truth expresses itself, its only and irreplaceable expression, and consequently to have rendered this expression tangible […].

Finally we reach a room that exhibits the same serious and ceremonial architecture that characterises the atrium, the first room. While the latter is meant to prepare, this one is meant to relieve. Before we return to daily life again, we can contemplate the emotions of art, behold it once again and calm down afterwards. We want to preserve its reverberations in us. After this we can leave.

Now, let us look at the house from the outside. What is the purpose of the façade? We demand it to be truthful; we want it to help us recognise the interior by its exterior, in the most concise way possible. The façade fulfils its purpose if we immediately see what is behind it. It is bad if it lies or conceals. It is not enough, however, for the façade to just be truthful. We also want it to be decorative […]

This leads to two questions: is the house of the Secession truthful? Is it decorative? We can answer both questions affirmatively. The very first glance tells the observer about the interior and purpose: this can be nothing else than a homestead of paintings; we can immediately spot the three parts – the atrium for the purification of the mind, the hall for the artwork and finally the architecture for devotion and contemplation, the chapel.

All of this naturally seems alien and strange to us, spoiled as we are. Our houses for living look like palaces for boasting, our workplaces look like they were rather made for festivities. Houses conceal their true nature. We have completely forgotten what a façade is meant to be. We are used to the idea that it is a mere game with pillars, beams and ornaments. We will have to remember first before can truly recognise the truth of the *Secession*-house.

But is it also decorative? Some would answer this question with a "No". They lament the lack of diversity, call it monotonous and bland, lacking colour while criticising that at no

point one is able to calmly perceive it as a whole. Well, we do not know anymore how to distinguish between the decorative and the riff-raff; everything is meant to be turbulent, gaudy and capricious. We have no patience and no mind anymore for the nobility of large surfaces. The process of building has become an empty game with charming designs, devoid of meaning […].

Koloman Moser,
Zebra Cabinet, before 1904.
Rose and lemon tree wood with intarsia of
rose and maple wood and mother of pearl,
138.5 x 98.8 x 49.5 cm.
Execution: *Wiener Werkstätte* (Vienna Workshop).
Kunsthaus Zug, Stiftung Sammlung Kamm, Zug.

Koloman Moser,
Picture Frame *The Abundant Catch*, 1901-1902.
MAK - Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

Koloman Moser,
Buffet Cabinet *The Abundant Catch*, 1900.
MAK - Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

Adolf Loos, *Elephant Trunk Table*, c. 1900.
MAK - Österreichisches Museum
für Angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

Adolf Loos, Bentwood chair for
the Café Museum, c. 1898.
Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Otto Wagner, Armchair for the *Postsparkasse*
(Post Office Savings Bank), 1906.
Wagner: Werk Museum Postsparkasse, Vienna.

This is what Hermann Bahr had to say about the architecture of the exhibition centre. Additionally, he also enthusiastically rhapsodised about the first exhibition in the house:

> Such an exhibition has not been before; an exhibition that did not feature one single painting. It is an exhibition that shows that we have people in Austria who can rise up and compare themselves to the very best of the European artists. A miracle! And a good joke moreover: It has been proven that you can make money with art, with pure art. That must come as a shock to the mercantilists of the association […] The Viennese, Your Viennese, Mr. Felix[6] – which you thought you know so well – flock in large groups to the exhibition to buy art, to buy Khnopff, Mr. Felix. It is pure joy to watch them! And that, although people always said "You are fools, you do not know the Viennese. The Viennese do not want to know anything about art". Now it shows that the Viennese are mature. How horribly have they been sinned against! Their pure conviction has survived, though. If we give them the artistic education that they direly need, we will not have to cower in shame in front of the artistic world in a few years.

His enthusiasm knew no bounds, since at the end of 1898 Bahr registered that the immovably conservative and old-fashioned artists were gnashing their teeth about the success of the movement.

> […] What irritates people the most is the huge success that our young Viennese had with their new exhibition. That is something no one had expected. Because the Viennese simply do not want to believe that a Viennese is crafty and able: he does not have any self-confidence. These words were uttered often enough in the association: "What? You want to invite foreigners? You want to show the Viennese the experiments of the French? Do you know what will happen? That will be the death of us! No one will be interested in us anymore. Just think! Once the people are used to such sophisticated things, what shall become of us? You have to realise that eventually! We Viennese cannot compete with the French or the English! Don't be delusional. It would be a crime to bring them into the city. On the contrary: they should be outlawed so as to protect us. In the end we are neighbours only of ourselves. We do not need Good Samaritans."
>
> That always has been the argument of the elders against the young: how can anyone be so stupid to summon one's own strongest competition?

If one wants to understand the success of this first exhibition, the awe and admiration of the Viennese for this new style of art and the artists of the

Secession, as well as the self-pity and wailing of the unseated, autocratic academic artists, one has to follow the explanations of Hermann Bahr further:

> […] In the second hall you can see a portrait from [Paul-Albert Besnard (1849-1934)]. The people have heard that Besnard is incredibly famous in France; that he has created a new form of monumental painting. Now they see this portrait and think: "This does not look modern at all!" Why not? "Well, aren't the modern artists those who remove things from the artificial light of the studio and put them into natural light? A modern painting can be recognised by things standing in the sun, right?" I respond with: yes and no. It is true that modern painters have left the artificial lighting of the studio. That is how everything began: they went into the sun. But why did they do it? - To show the things in their natural light, in their natural environment.

Josef Hoffmann,
Chair for the *Cabaret Fledermaus*, 1907.
Kunsthaus Zug, Stiftung Sammlung Kamm, Zug.

Koloman Moser, Armchair, 1903.
Execution: Prag-Rudniker, Vienna - used
in the 18th Secession Exhibition and in the
entrance hall of the Purkersdorf Sanatorium.
Beechwood, varnished, basketwork, 72.5 x 66 cm.
Leopold Museum, Vienna.

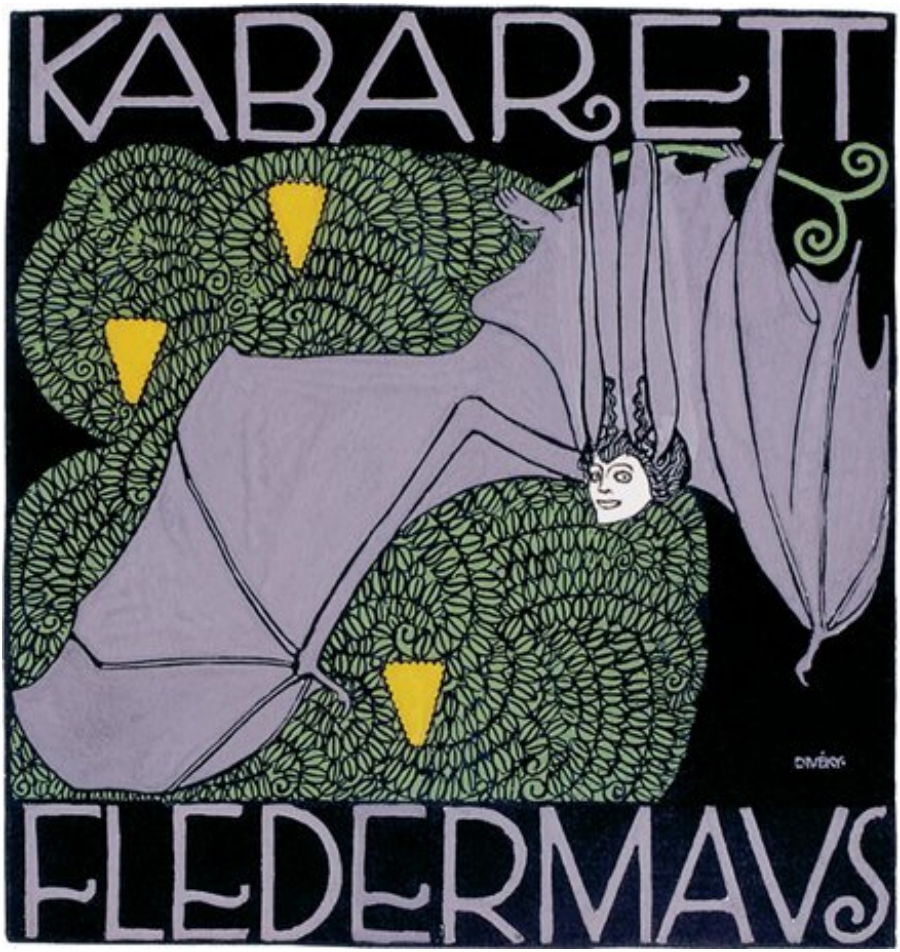
> Let us have a look what this Besnard wanted to paint here. "A woman in an evening dress, obviously a very elegant woman:" Yes, something that you would call a lady or a cosmopolitan. Now, what is the natural light that such a lady is living in? "That depends, if she is going for a stroll…" Ah, excuse me, if she is going for a stroll, she will probably not wear an evening dress but rather a simple and elegant dress. Consequently she will not look like a "lady" anymore. If I want to portray her as lady, I need to paint her in an evening dress. What is the natural light for the evening dress of a lady? Is it not the artificial light of our great festivities? Does the seamstress think of the sun? No, she is thinking of the gas-lamp and the electrical light and the fire in the fireplace. To paint the evening dress in the sun means to remove it from its natural environment. To paint a lady without evening dress means to paint her incognito. If you want to have a portrait of a "lady", you need the evening dress and the artificial light. This would be true to her nature.
>
> In the same hall is a painting from [Belgian painter Eugène Laermans (1864-1940)], *Die Streikenden* (*The Strikers*). It shows a train of strikers, looking grim and determined, marching in tight formation under a flag. At the first glance, before coming close to study the details, it appears threatening. People say: "That simply shows the dreadful, the threatening nature of approaching masses!" But then, when they come closer they start to laugh. "The individual figures are all caricatures! […] What does the painter actually want to express? Does he want to mock the workers? The painting is too serious for that. But if he wants to create a serious effect, why does he paint such crooks?" Have you ever seen a street riot? Try to look at the individual people involved; most of them are strange and repugnant and still, the whole scenery has certain grandeur. That is what the painter obviously is trying to express […] this is the secret of painting […].

Josef Hoffmann, who played an important role in the shaping of aesthetic perception and the study and understanding of aesthetics in the 20th century, also contributed to the success of the first exhibition. As a dedication to him, visitors of the second exhibition could read the following text in the catalogue:

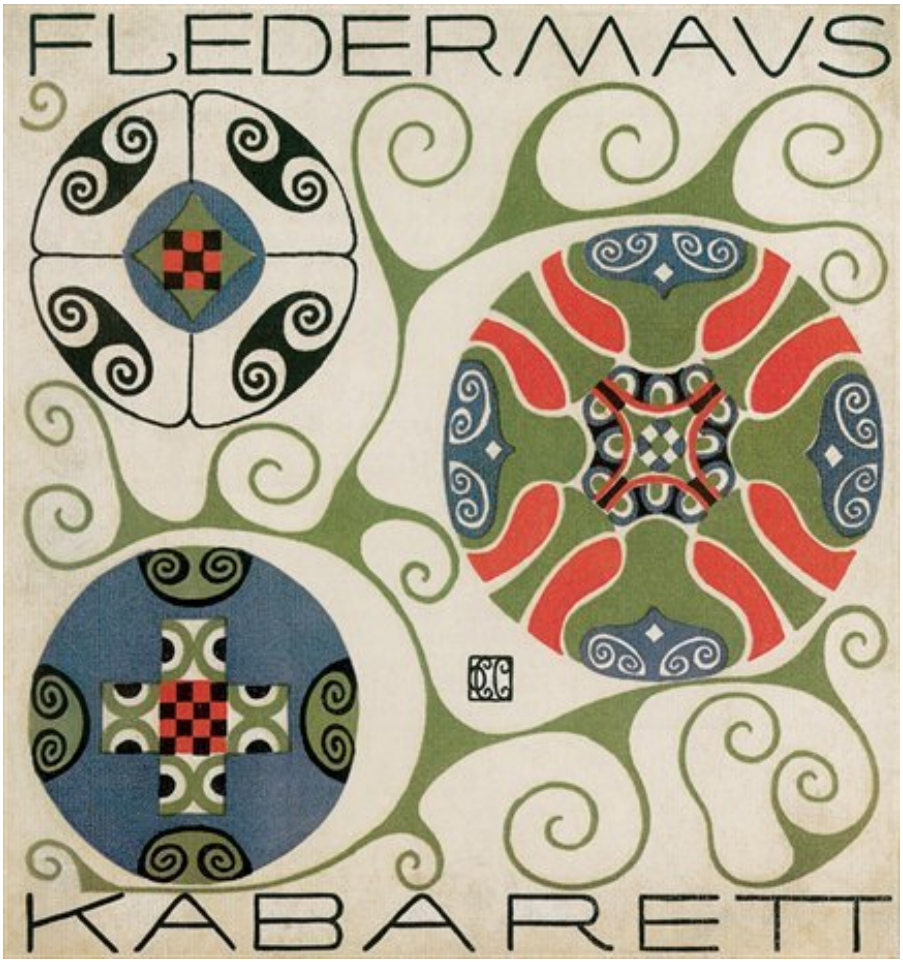
> May this house become a home for the true artist and true art lover! May they both be united in the holy service of creating, enjoying, searching and finding in this temple! May the words of Hevesi, as they are written above our building, become true – Every era needs its art and all art needs its freedom […].

The Viennese Secession differed in certain respects from the *Jugendstil*-movement. They used decorative elements that were directly derived from nature, like leaves, animals, or grapevine shoots. The floral elements often included three-dimensional adornments like snakes or salamanders. This association of arts was not only exclusive to painters as their membership was founded on the concept of holistic art. They were comprised of designers, architects, artisans, and painters who wanted to unite all aspects of life into one comprehensive artwork.

The sixth exhibition in 1900 was dedicated to Japanese art and Japonism as a European-born, Japanese-influenced branch of art. In essence, it was a time of awakening for all arts. For the 13th exhibition in 1902 – which 21 artists enriched with their contributions – Klimt created the *Beethoven Frieze*, an allegorical painting portraying man's search for happiness, inspired by Beethoven's last symphony. The 9th symphony in itself was a novelty in the history of music, as the movement required soloists and a mixed choir. Later, in 1985, this last movement – combined with Friedrich Schiller's poem *Ode to Joy* – would be chosen as the hymn for the European Union. Max Klinger also contributed to the Beethoven-theme with his sculpture *Beethoven.* Both works of art have come to symbolise the Viennese Secession.



Josef von Divéky, Poster design for the
Cabaret Fledermaus, 1907.
Collection and Archive,
Universität für angewandte Kunst, Vienna.



Carl Otto Czeschka,
First *Cabaret Fledermaus* program (title-page), 1907.
Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Josef Hoffmann,
Cabaret Fledermaus (bar), 1907.
Photograph by Bertold Löffler, 1908.
Collection and Archive, Universität für
angewandte Kunst, Vienna.

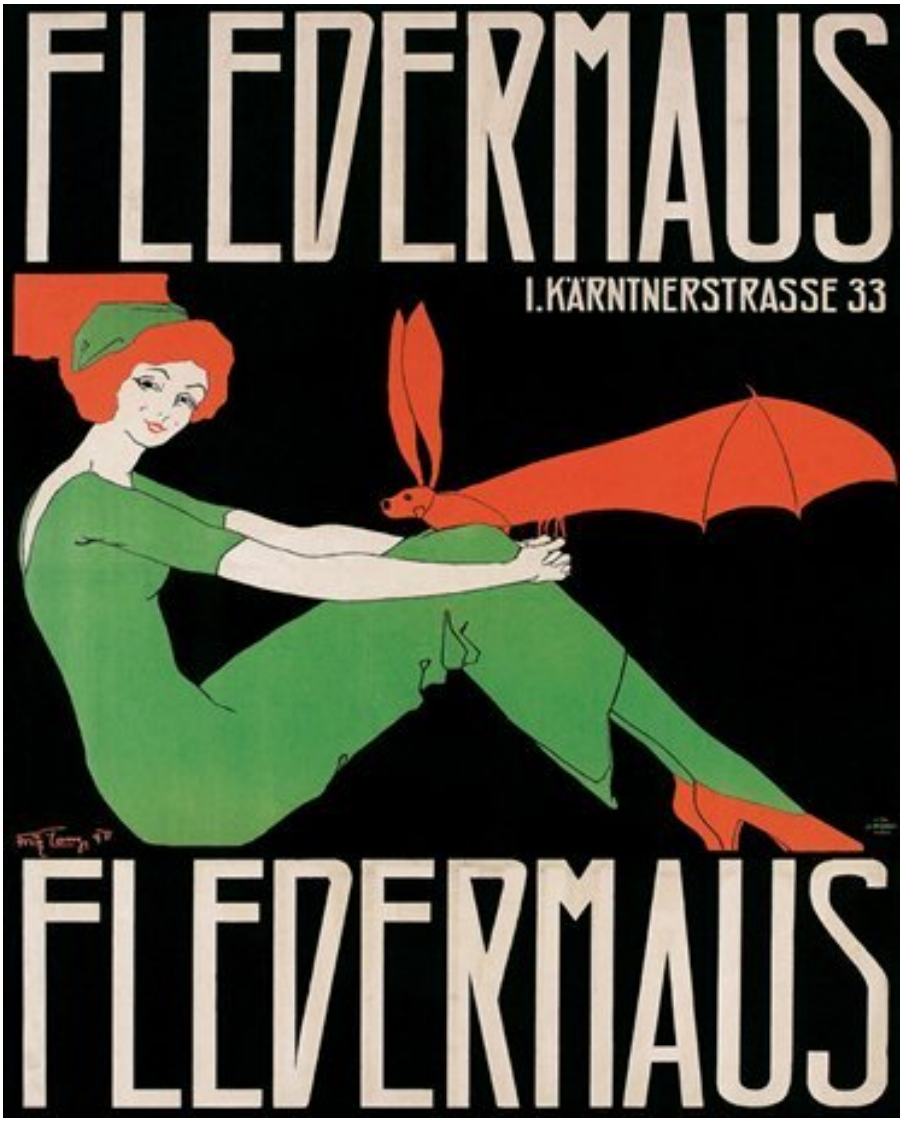
Josef Hoffmann,
Design for Vienna's *Cabaret Fledermaus*, 1907.

The *Beethoven Frieze*

Klimt's painting cycle *Beethoven Frieze* (pp. 116, 118) was, together with Klinger's sculpture, a grand homage to the composer who lived and worked in Vienna until his death on 26 March 1827. He had been one of the most celebrated pianists and composers of his time. During the exhibition, the frieze was spread over three different walls and arranged sequentially in the left wing of the Secession-house. The individual paintings are categorised according to their order on the walls. First come *Floating Genii*, *Suffering Humanity*, and *Knight in Shining Armour*. The second wall showed *Hostile Forces*, *The Gorgons*, and the giant *Typhoeus*. The third wall showed *Poetry*, *The Arts*, and *Choir of Angels*.

The *Beethoven Frieze* was intended as a backdrop for Max Klinger's

coloured, three-metre high sculpture. Since most of the ceiling frescoes in the University of Vienna were destroyed, the frieze is the most important survivor. The huge and fragile – it was painted on plaster – painting survived miraculously, although it was initially not meant to be a permanent installation. This is a small comfort for the other art losses that the world of art suffered as a consequence of World War II.



Fritz Lang, Poster for the
Cabaret Fledermaus, 1911.
MAK - Österreichisches Museum für
Angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

Bertold Löffler, Brisé fan for
the *Cabaret Fledermaus*, c. 1908.
Quisquilien Collection,
Österreichisches Theatermuseum, Vienna.

The Secession III

With 56,000 visitors and sales amounting to 85,000 *Kronen*, the Beethoven-exhibition established itself instantly as an influential element in Austria. Even the omnipresent ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Kaiser Franz Joseph I, was among the visitors. To honour the success of the exhibition, the emperor bestowed the golden order of merit upon Klimt. The eighth issue of *Ver Sacrum* published the results of the sales: 218 paintings.

In 1905, Klimt resigned as director of the Secession after long-running, irreconcilable conflicts with other members of the group. An untraversable chasm had opened between two parties within the association: the artists surrounding Klimt and the artists who wanted to focus solely on painting. The "Klimt Group" wanted to further applied arts like architecture and design while the others wanted to improve the art of painting by making it the sole concern of the Secession. The dream of the Secession, to create harmony between the arts and thus deliver the world through art, had proven itself to be an unattainable Utopia.

How did contemporary witness Hermann Bahr judge the history of the Secession? He had already voiced his concerns five years earlier:

> […] Everyone is talking about the success of the Secession. People say that there never has been such a success in Vienna. Do we have a reason to rejoice? Are we finally moving forward? Just think of how long Berlin has striven for a Secession-movement and how it still has not been successful in creating a coherent movement even though the Berlin public quickly embraces everything that is new. Do we have a good reason to be proud of the Viennese? I don't know. I can't help myself; I can't get rid of doubt and fear. It may be a success but I don't think that it is the success of the Secession. I have the impression that is not at all the Secession that has won but something else entirely, something that is the exact opposite of the Secession [...].

Furthermore he wrote:

> What is it that the Secession originally wanted? What was its purpose? What did the young artists think when they left the old association? People said that they are against old art and for a new art. They were called all manner of names like symbolists or naturalists. Well, we have left those stupid words behind nowadays. Now we know that it is not about "old" or "new" or a specific school of painting, which they did not want to destroy everything that came before them or even that they wanted to establish a certain technique or way of seeing as scales to measure artists against. There are no old or new artists. There are

> artists and – let's say – makers.
>
> Artists are those who possess their own perception of the world, the people and life in general, and have the gift to share these impressions with others. Makers are those who just create without perceiving anything but have considerable talent to imitate the impressions of others. That is at the heart of the argument that has been running for so many years –in literature as well as in art. People argued against the process of just "making", against the absence of impression and emotion, against the empty routine […].

This shows that there were imitators who wanted to jump on the sudden success-bandwagon and profit from the work of other artists.

Koloman Moser, *Pot with lid*, 1906.
Kunsthaus Zug, Stiftung Sammlung Kamm, Zug.

Gustav Klimt,
Tree of Life (detail), c.1905-1909.
MAK - Österreichisches Museum für
Angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

ARTIST OF THE VIENNESE SECESSION

Gustav Klimt

(Baumgarten, 1862-1918, Vienna)

There are no self-portraits.
I am not interested in my person – rather in other, female, people
[…]

Gustav Klimt was the motor and the soul of the Viennese Secession. This is why he is allotted the most space in this chapter even though he had already left the Secession in 1905.

No connection to the outside world can disrupt the appeal of Klimt's portraits, landscapes, allegorical or other representative paintings. For the development of his seductive oeuvre, which has many aspects, one of them being a vehicle for the complete unravelling of the sensuality of the female body, Klimt makes use of oriental colours and motifs, a flat, two-dimensional canvas-space, and strongly stylised images. Among his main inspirations were the art of Japan, ancient Egypt, and Byzantine Ravenna. He had already received a government allowance to study at Vienna's *Kunstgewerbeschule* (Artisan's School) as a 14-year-old teenager, where his talent as a painter and illustrator began to unfold. His first works therefore earned him an early and precocious success. His first important contribution to the world of art was the foundation of the artist group *Künstler-Compagnie* with his brother Ernst and friend Franz Matsch in 1879.

Late 19th century Vienna was in a period of architectonic transition since Kaiser Franz Joseph I decided to have the medieval city walls demolished in order to build the *Ring*. Since the areas surrounding the *Ring* were planned as upper-class residential areas, Klimt and his partners had many profitable opportunities to fill the walls of the new houses with art. In 1897, Klimt left the conservative *Künstlerhaus-Genossenschaft* (Artist's House Union) and founded the Secession along with a few close friends. Public acceptance of the movement soon followed. Their motto was – set in stone above the entrance to their exhibition centre – "Every era needs its art and all art needs its freedom."

The Secession did not only represent the very best in art that Austria had to offer, but it also helped to make Vienna an internationally recognised city of art by inviting foreign artists, like French impressionists or Belgian naturalists, to exhibit their work in the city. His rising fame as a modern artist

in turn led to a decline of his reputation as an “acceptable artist” among the members of the Austrian upper class. The more he distanced himself from the academic style of his early artwork, the more he plunged into scandals surrounding his modern art. These scandals would direct his artistic career along new paths.

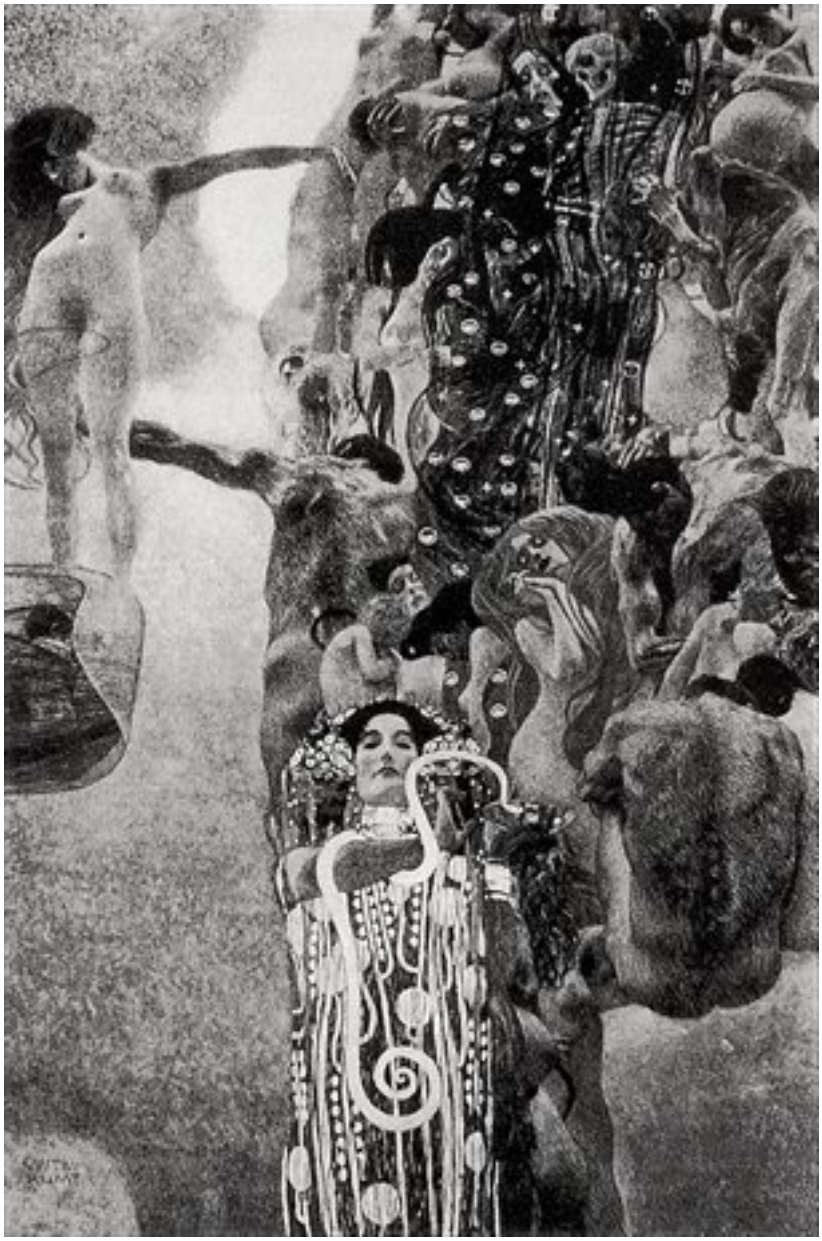
In 1894, Klimt and Matsch received the commission to create a wall painting for the festive hall of the Vienna University, which would include portrayals of the three most prominent courses of study – medicine, philosophy, and law. The nature of this commission is easily understood: the university expected a series of formal, dignified artworks in a classical style, which were supposed to portray the healing power of medical science, the wisdom of the philosopher, and undoubtedly the robed figure of Justice holding scales with blindfolded eyes representing law and jurisprudence. After a few years of hard work however, the university received such a controversial painting that it immediately caused a scandal and sparked wild debates over its propriety. Klimt eventually had to pay back the advance and withdraw his paintings. Nevertheless, in 1900, Klimt received a golden medal for the painting *Philosophy* at the World Fair in Paris.

View towards the main hall of the
10th Secession Exhibition, 1901.
Faculty picture, *Medicine* and other paintings
by Gustav Klimt. Design by Koloman Moser.
Reproduction from *Ver Sacrum*, vol. 4, 1901, p. 159.

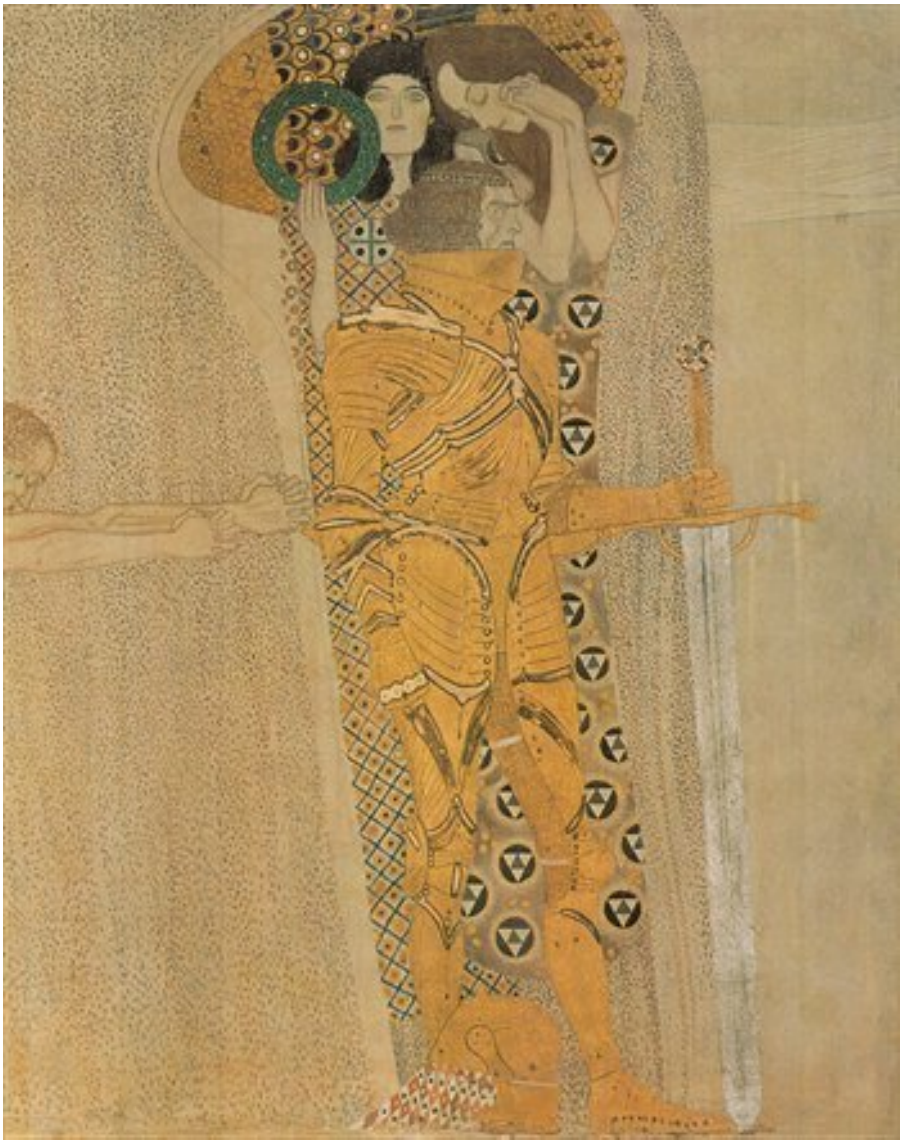
When he exhibited the unfinished painting *Medicine* in the following year, the outrage was even worse and the polemics reached an all-time high in their fervour. It is hard to say what Klimt wanted to express with this painting. The vision that the painting is conveying is chaotic and almost hellishly bleak. The skulls of old and wrinkled figures, and the randomly scattered people attest more to the decay and suffering of the human body rather than to its healing. The figure at the bottom with the snake wrapped around her arm is meant to represent the concept of medicine. Her portrayal, however, in her ornamental garment rather evokes the image of a priestess that is sacrificing the sick. The other female figure which is positioned beside the pillar of the human bodies and silhouettes is notable for her posture: her arms are thrown out as if mockingly imitating the crucifixion.

The sketch for this figure is compelling proof of Klimt's extraordinary talent as an artist. The ductus of his pencil and the delicate shading lead our eyes to the pubic region of the woman. It is also interesting to note that the woman in the sketch is lying on the floor with her back pressed against an invisible object while she is standing unstably, unsupported as if she were to

fall down every moment in the painting.



Gustav Klimt, *Medicine*, 1900-1907.
Oil on canvas, 430 x 300 cm.
Burnt in 1945 at Immendorf Castle.



Gustav Klimt,
The Beethoven Frieze: Ambition, Compassion and the Knight in Shining Armor (detail), 1902.
Casein on plaster, height: 220 cm.
Secession Hall, Vienna.

This work also represents a complete break with the tradition of depicting round and homely women that were predominant in the academic style of the nineteenth century. Klimt paints his women with long hair and lean, curvy bodies. Their sexual confidence makes them attractive but – in its directness – menacing at the same time. Klimt's contemporary, the journalist and critic Berta Zuckerkandl (1864-1945), noted in her memoirs:

> […] Klimt transformed the Viennese women into the ideal type of woman: modern, with a boyish figure. These figures exerted a mysterious fascination on the viewer. Although the word "vamp" was not known back then, Klimt painted women who fit that description perfectly; women with the allure of Greta Garbo or Marlene Dietrich, long before they actually lived […]

The 14th exhibition of the Secession in 1902, again, generated a hail of criticisms. The central object of the exhibition was Max Klinger's sculpture *Beethoven,* which Klimt sought to complement with a frieze that would be the backdrop for the exhibition room. One of the components of the frieze was a panel that showed three figures, *Lust*, *Gluttony*, and *Unchastity*, collectively called *Hostile Forces*, in Klimt's painting. Why Klimt chose his theme as a contribution to Beethoven of all things, was never entirely apparent. Nevertheless, this painting already showcases some of the Klimt-typical exotic ornamentation that would feature heavily in his later works. These ornaments were meant to create a composition in which decorative elements and the human figure can occupy the same space. In his portrayal of *Lust*, Klimt uses the figure's long hair to cover up her pubic region but, at the same time, also draws attention to it. The sumptuous depiction of *Gluttony* more resembles an oriental pasha than a woman – a man whose corpulence has reached the stage where his chest has transformed into huge breasts. Conservative Viennese society was deeply shocked by these paintings. A contemporary of Klimt once used the following anecdote:

> Suddenly the visitors of the exhibition could hear a scream from the middle of the room: "Ghastly!" A nobleman, customer, and art collector, whom, together with other close friends, the group had given early access to the rooms, lost his poise when faced with the frieze. He screamed the word with a high-pitched, shrill voice […] He threw the word like a stone against a wall: "Ghastly!"

Klimt, who was standing on a scaffolding, working on his frieze just responded by throwing an amused look in the direction of the screaming man. This calm gesture best illustrates Klimt's usual reaction to the scandals that he caused. Although Klimt lost his imperial allowance due to the scandals surrounding the university paintings, as well as his support from the upper strata of society, he was still lucky enough to earn a sufficient amount of money through painting portraits. However, he was refused the chair for fine

arts at the university more than once.

It is sometimes hard to realise that there are hardly any concrete details about the private life of a very famous man who lived not too long ago, compared with the information we have about the private lives of prominent figures from much more distant ages. The reason for this is Klimt's own discretion and reservedness. While many details illustrate his artistic career and are cemented by facts, the scarce information about his private life is based on accounts that are barely better than hearsay. On the one hand, he is portrayed as an insatiable womaniser with the physique of a peasant and the strength of an ox, who slept with numerous women, mainly his models. On the other hand, he seems like a hypochondriacal, self-confessed bachelor with routine habits, who lived with his mother and sisters and commuted daily to his studio in suburban Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, *The Beethoven Frieze*
(central panel, detail), 1902.
Casein on plaster, height: 220 cm.
Secession Hall, Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, *Hope II*, 1907-1908.
Oil, gold and platinum on canvas, 110.5 x 110.5 cm.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Gustav Klimt, *Hope I*, 1903.
Oil on canvas, 189.2 x 67 cm.
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Klimt never married but maintained a long-lasting relationship with the sister of his sister-in-law, Emilie Flöge. In 1891, his brother Ernst married Helene Flöge who ran a beauty salon together with her sister. The marriage only last 15 months but through Helene, Klimt was introduced to Emilie. From 1897 onwards, Klimt spent nearly every summer with the Flöge family in the village of Attersee. It was a calm and peaceful time for him which he used to paint the landscapes that account for almost a quarter of his oeuvre. The details of the relationship between Klimt and Emilie Flöge are sketchy, but several known facts still cause debates over how platonic their relationship really was. They never lived together but Klimt asked for Emilie's attendance at his deathbed. Throughout his life he maintained an extensive correspondence with Emilie and Marie Zimmermann, the mother of two of his three illegitimate children; his letters to Marie are affectionate, describing details of his work and life while letters to Emilie are rather bland and devoid of emotion just containing things like travel arrangements or travel descriptions.

The *Portrait of Emilie Flöge* shows an attractive young woman, who is wearing a dress of her own design as well as jewellery that was designed by Koloman Moser. Many of her dresses and fabrics were designed by Klimt specifically for her fashion salon. It is a remarkably defeating painting which is most notable for the delicate, almost poignant indication of sensuality that expresses itself in the smooth light on the skin above her bodice.

How different is this portrait with the painting *Hope I* (1903), which shows a nude pregnant woman, Herma, one of Klimt's favourite models. Supposedly, Klimt is reported to have said that her back was more beautiful and more intelligent than the faces of many other models. When she repeatedly failed to appear in his studio to model, Klimt, who was usually very concerned about his models, sent someone to inquire about her well-being. When he found out that she was not sick but pregnant he insisted that she come to his studio. Thus she became the model for *Hope I* and *Hope II*.

A remarkable example of Klimt's ability to use just a few pencil-drawn lines to create a sensual and erotic effect can be seen in the 1905/1906 sketch *Freundinnen in Umarmung* (*Friends in Embrace*). A small dark circle draws attention to the thighs and the buttocks of the woman. It is not uncommon for Klimt to draw his women while they are masturbating, revelling in their sensual pleasure with closed eyes and face slightly averted. Men rarely appear in the pencil drawings; if they appear they are usually shown with their back towards the viewer.

While Klimt expresses his clear admiration for female beauty, he always shows a certain distance between the genders when he paints men and women together in a painting. In his most famous painting *The Kiss* (1908), the face of the man is not visible, tellingly. He is holding the woman and his hands are cradling her face with great tenderness. Although she responds in kind, she

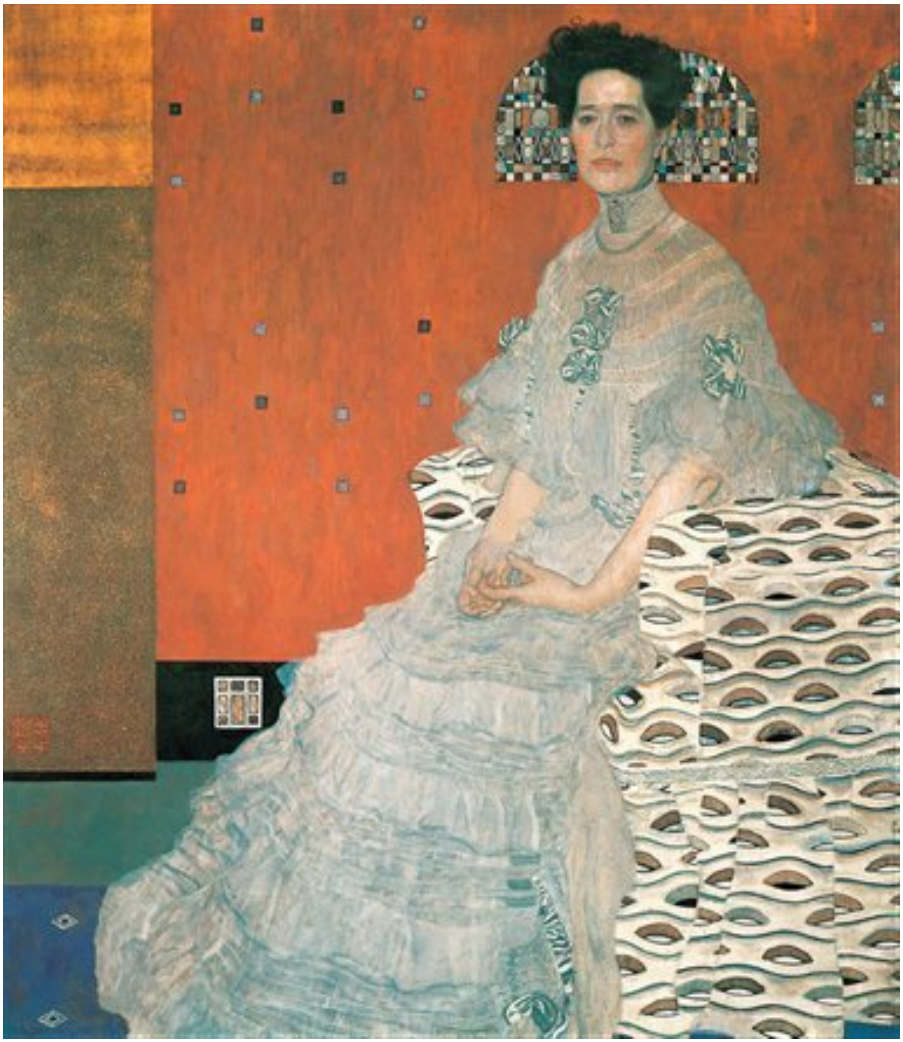
still seems to shy away from the embrace. She just offers her cheek for the kiss and with her hands she seems to push away his.

The freedom in Klimt's drawings is a sharp contrast to the portraits of the ladies of fine society which he started painting in 1903. While the women in his drawings are not confined by clothing or society standards, the women in his portraits, like *Portrait of Fritza Riedler* or *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, are almost asphyxiated in fabrics and ornaments. Their faces are the focal points of the paintings while their bodies, in their ornamental dresses, almost fuse with the background. This allows the faces to appear almost fragile, detached and lonely. Another remarkable painting is the *Portrait of Margaret-Stonborough-Wittgenstein*, since it is one of the few images that is not dominated by patterned fabrics. Furthermore, it is a clear homage to James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) whom Klimt greatly admired.

Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Emilie Flöge*, 1902.
Oil on canvas, 181 x 84 cm.
Wien Museum Karlplatz, Vienna.

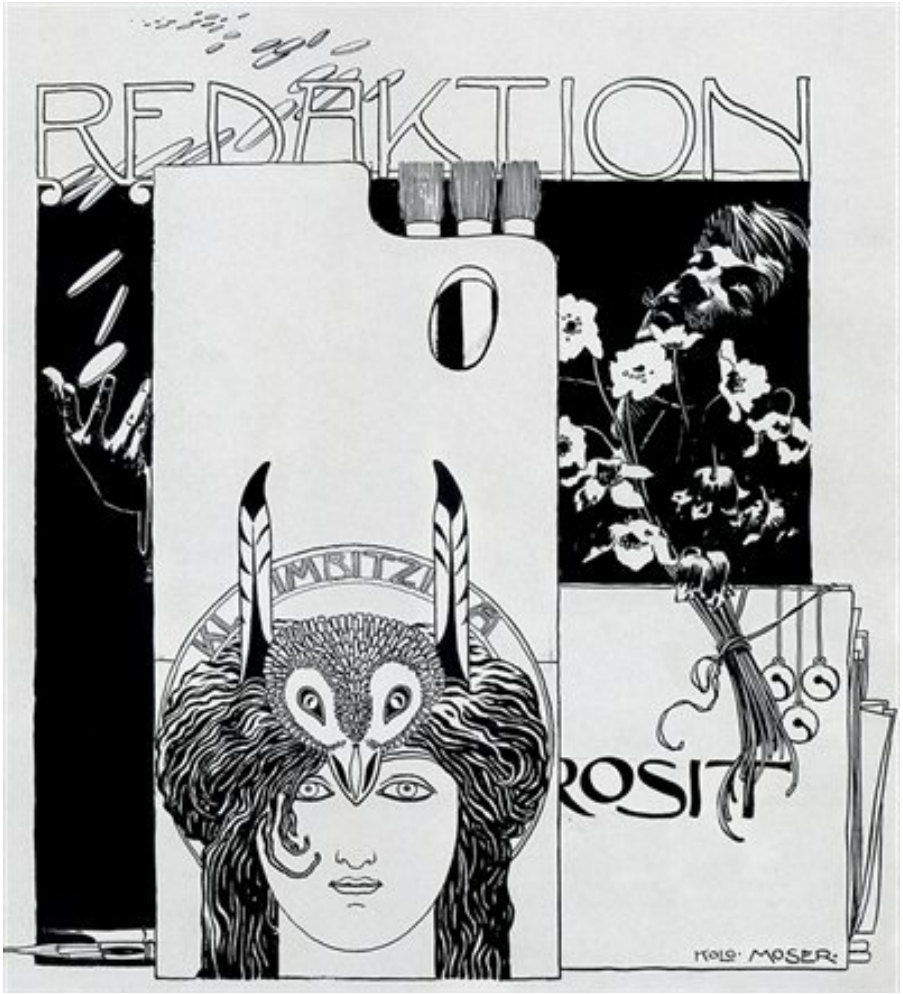
Gustav Klimt,
Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I, 1907.
Oil, silver and gold on canvas,
140 x 140 cm. Neue Galerie, New York.

Gustav Klimt, *The Kiss*, 1907-1908.
Oil, silver and gold on canvas, 180 x 180 cm.
Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna.



Gustav Klimt,
Portrait of Fritza Riedler (1860-1927), born Friederike Langer, 1906.
Oil on canvas, 152 x 134 cm.
Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna.

Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Margaret Stonborough-Wittgenstein*, 1905.
Oil on canvas, 179.8 x 90.5 cm
Neue Pikakothek, Munich.



Koloman Moser, Illustration for
Redaktion Prosit with self-portrait, c. 1895.
Pencil, china ink, and collage on paper, 42 x 34 cm.
Collection and Archive, Universität für
angewandte Kunst, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, Cover design for
Meggendorfer Blätter (Meggendorf Folios), c. 1895.
China ink, collage on paper,
37.5 x 26 cm. Collection and Archive,
Universität für angewandte Kunst, Vienna.

Throughout his whole life, Klimt only gave one comment about himself and his art:

> […] I am convinced that I – as a person – am not extraordinary at all. I am simply an artist who is painting from morning to evening. I am not talented with words or letters, especially not when I have to talk about myself or my work. Only the idea of having to write a letter fills me with fear. I am afraid you have to make due without a portrait of myself, either painted or written. That is not a great loss, however. Whoever wants to get to know me better – as an artist only that is worth your trouble – should study my paintings and try to find out who I am and what I want

[…].

Gustav Klimt was an unusual and highly extraordinary artist who had neither precursors nor successors. On 11 January 1918 he suffered a seizure which paralysed half his body. Despite a temporary recovery, he died a month later. After his death his reputation as an artist remained controversial. Art historian Hans Tietze (1880-1954), a friend of Klimt and author of his first monograph, describes his influence and legacy:

> […] Klimt dragged Viennese art out of its isolation in which it had been rotting and opened up the world for it. At the turn of the century he was the guarantee, more than anyone else, for the artistic individuality of Vienna […].

Koloman Moser

(Vienna, 1868-1918)

Koloman Moser was also a pioneer of modernity. He worked as a painter, illustrator, and artisan. He created jewellery, glassworks, furniture, fabrics, and wallpapers in all of these branches. Before beginning his career as multi-faceted artist, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna where he was taught by Otto Wagner (1841-1918), the famous architect and city planner of Vienna. He also attended courses by Franz Matsch and Gustav Klimt. During his studies he also met architects and decorators Joseph Maria Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann.

At the beginning of the 1890s, Moser began developing an innovative and highly individual variant of the *Jugendstil* while working as an illustrator. In 1897, he was part of the alliance of artists and architects surrounding Klimt, Olbrich, and Hoffmann, who founded the Secession to propagate radically new aesthetic ideas. Moser contributed heavily: he designed and also partly produced the stained glass-windows, textiles, furniture, and different decorative objects for the Secession building. Furthermore, he also created posters and illustrations.

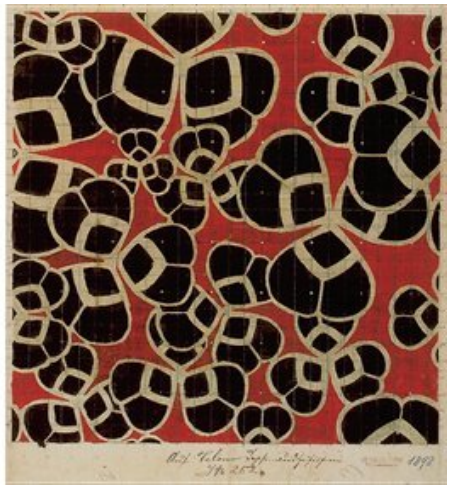
During these years Moser was one of the most influential artists in Vienna. As an expression of his passion for *Jugendstil* he organised the themed sixth exhibition of the Secession. In the following years, he worked as stage designer for the ensuing exhibitions of the group. In the same year, he began to create more and more monumental paintings which were especially remarkable for their bright colours. Moser's most important paintings were created in the second decade of the 20th century. Until 1918, he taught at the same university in which he once studied.

Koloman Moser, Mosaic-glass for a reading room,
first exhibited at the 14th Secession Exhibition:
Klinger, Beethoven, 1902. Private collection.

Koloman Moser, Mosaic-glass for a reading room,
first exhibited at the 14th Secession Exhibition:
Klinger, Beethoven, 1902. Private collection.

Koloman Moser, *Donauwellen. Wanddekor für ein Badezimmer* (Danube waves. Wall decoration for a bathroom), 1901. Illustration in the portfolio *Die Quelle. Flächenschmuck von Koloman Moser*. Coloured lithograph, 25 x 30 cm. Wien Museum, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, *Die Reciproken Tänzerinnen*
(The Reciprocal Dancers), 1901.
Illustration in the portfolio *Die Quelle.*
Flächenschmuck von Koloman Moser, (ed.) Martin Gerlach,
published by Gerlach & Schenk, Vienna, 1901.
Coloured lithograph, 25 x 30 cm.
Wien Museum, Vienna.



Koloman Moser, Textile design "*Abimelech*"
for Backhausen, design no 3806, 1899.
Pencil and watercolour on paper,
44 x 31 cm. Backhausen Interior Textiles, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, Design for knotted carpet
"*Kleeblatt*" (Shamrock) for Backhausen,
design no 3436, 1898. Design for the
Hotel Bristol in Bolzano.
Pencil and watercolour on paper,
48 x 60 cm. Backhausen Interior Textiles, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, Design for furniture velour
"*Lindenblüten*" (Linden blossom) for Backhausen,
Design no 3732, 1899. Design for the
Hotel Bristol in Bolzano. Pencil and watercolour
on paper, 43 x 36.5 cm.
Backhausen Interior Textiles, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, Textile design "*Vogel Bülow*"
(Golden oriole) for Backhausen,
Design no 3600, 1899. Pencil and watercolour
on paper, 34 x 21 cm.
Backhausen Interior Textiles, Vienna.

Moser also contributed to the magazine *Die Fläche* (*The Space*) and the self-styled "illustrated biweekly scripture for the artistic, spiritual and economic interests of urban culture" magazine *Hohe Warte;* both published in Vienna and Leipzig. Another title they used for their magazine was *Organ for the Nurture of Artistic Education*. Their topics included house-, city-, and interior-architecture, but also with interior art, fine arts, and technology. The magazine staff represented the various fields of interests; among them architects Josef Hoffmann and *Jugendstil*-critic Hermann Muthesius (1861-1927). Later the group was complimented by another architect, the art theoretician Paul Schultze-Naumburg (1869-1949), who later joined the NSDAP and gathered questionable fame with his nationalistic art theory books *Kunst aus Blut und Boden* (*Art from Blood and Soil*) (1934) and *Rassengebundene Kunst* (*Race-Related Art*) (1934), and professor Otto Wagner.

In 1903, Moser was involved in the foundation of another important association of artists, the *Wiener Werkstätte* (Vienna Workshops) which offered jobs and research opportunities to graduate students. They crafted the most diverse decorative objects in their studios: jewellery, tapestries, and articles of daily use. Some of these creations were used in the decoration of buildings that were conceived by the association-internal architects, like Otto Wagner.

In later years, Moser travelled and worked in different countries like France, Germany, Switzerland, and the Low Countries. He especially favoured the cities of Bern, Hamburg, and Paris. In 1905, he participated – together with Klimt and Josef Hoffmann – in the celebrated project of the now famous *Palais Stoclet* in Brussels. In the same year he left the Secession and two years later, also, the *Wiener Werkstätte*. His artistic style quickly started to change and transform, inspired by French and Belgian Art Nouveau, into a more sober version of the *Jugendstil* with long and geometrical shapes replacing the intricate and curved, endlessly dancing arcs.

Moser fused various influences from "high" art as well as from applied art, and was fascinated with the different branches of artistic expression, from painting to interior decoration and illustration. This makes him one of the artists who embodied the ideals of the *Jugendstil*, Art Nouveau, the Arts and Crafts Movement and ultimately the Secession. He died in October of 1918, aged 50, suffering from throat cancer.

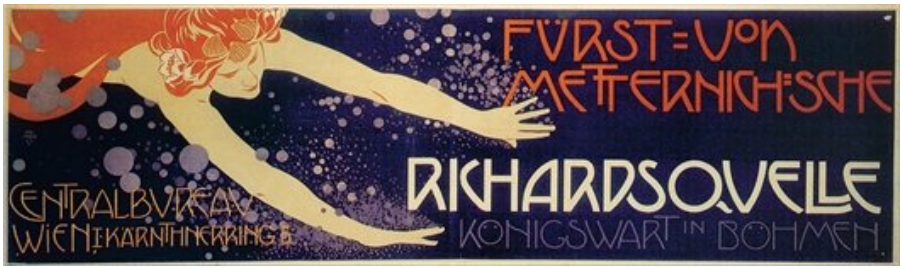
Koloman Moser, Metal reliefs for
the offices of the *Wiener Werkstätte* in Vienna VII,
Neustiftgasse 32-34, 1904. Execution: *Wiener Werkstätte*
(Vienna Workshop). Silver-plated copper,
wooden frame, 15 x 14.8 cm each.
Wien Museum, Vienna.

Koloman Moser, Metal reliefs for a wall
fitting in the drawing room of the apartment of
Dr. Hermann Wittgenstein, 1904.
Execution: *Wiener Werkstätte* (Vienna Workshop).
Silver-plated copper, 22.6 x 22.5 cm each.
Wien Museum, Vienna.

Koloman Moser,
Marbled paper "*Fische*" (Fish), c. 1904.
Marbled paper, 17.3 x 17.5 cm.
Collection and Archive,
Universität für angewandte Kunst, Vienna.

Koloman Moser,
Marbled paper "*Fische*" (Fish), c. 1904.
Marbled paper, 28.5 x 27.5 cm.
Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Koloman Moser,
Marbled paper "*Blumen*" (Flowers), c. 1904.
Marbled paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Leopold Museum, Vienna.



Koloman Moser, Poster for
"*Fürst von Metternich'sche Richardsquelle*"
(mineral water brand), 1899.
Coloured lithograph; print: Friedrich Sperl,
Vienna, 51.5 x 175 cm. Albertina, Vienna.

Koloman Moser,
Poster for *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*
(Austria's Illustrated Newspaper), 1900.
Coloured lithograph; print: Industrial Association of
Graphic Artists (formerly Philipp & Kramer),
Wien, 82 x 110 cm. MAK - Österreichisches Museum
für Angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

Alfred Roller, Cover of *Ver Sacrum*,
first issue, January 1898.
Published by Gerlach & Schenk, Vienna.

Alfred Roller

(Brno, 1864-1935, Vienna)

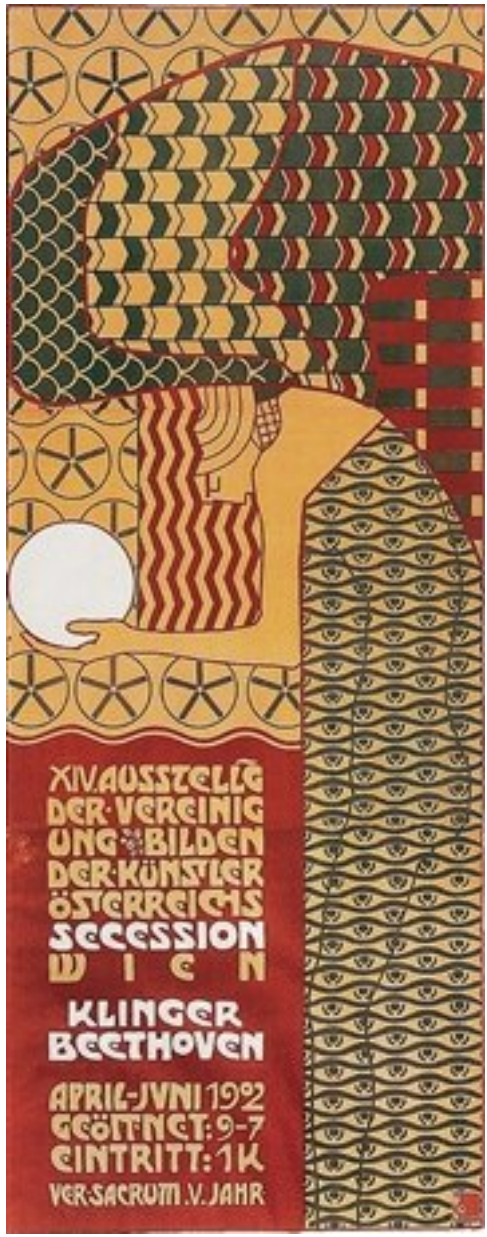
Another founding member of the Viennese Secession who also acted as president from 1902 to 1905 was Alfred Roller, although he never attained the same fame as some of his colleagues. Today, he is mainly known in professional circles.

He took the main concept of his art, the idea of holistic art, from 19th century romantic Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Although Wagner was referring to the fusion of music and poetry, Roller adapted the concept for his own purposes and practiced it in his capacity as stage designer. Prior to that, he designed the 1898 January cover of *Ver Sacrum*, developed several

typefaces and posters for the 12th and the 14th exhibitions of the Secession. A photo, presumably from 1903, shows him together with Carl Moll, Gustav Mahler, and Max Reinhardt in the garden of Moll's villa, having a coffee break. Roller left the Secession in the same year as Klimt. Two years before that Gustav, Mahler had already invited him to work at the Vienna State Opera. After his departure from the Secession, it was his work at the State Opera that made him successful.

Aside from his friendship and working relationship with Mahler, he also collaborated with Richard Strauss (1864-1949). Roller designed and produced all stage settings for the debut performances of Strauss' plays. Later, he also worked at the *Burgtheater* (Imperial Court Theatre) with theatre director Max Reinhandt. Reinhardt also employed him as a teacher at his *Reinhardt-Seminar*, a workshop for actors. A whole generation of famous actors of the German-speaking parts of Europe graduated from the *Seminar*. Together with Reinhardt and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Roller founded the Salzburg Festival as a successor to the late international music festivals. In collaboration with Hofmannsthal, he also created the stage design for Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* (*Everyman*) (1911).

On a side note, a yet nameless admirer of Alfred Roller was a man named Adolf Hitler, who would have liked to start an apprenticeship with Roller. They presumably did not meet in Vienna but rather later when Hitler was already chancellor of the Reich and received Roller in an official capacity. Alfred Roller died on 21 June 1935 in Vienna.



Alfred Roller, Poster for the 14th Secession Exhibition: *Klinger, Beethoven*, 1902.

Egon Schiele, *Stylised Flowers in Front of a Decorative Background*, 1908.
Oil on canvas, 65.5 x 65.5 cm.
Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Egon Schiele

(Tulln, 1890-1918, Vienna)

Art cannot be modern, art is eternal.

Egon Schiele's oeuvre is unique to such an extent that it simply defies categorisation. Since he was initially heavily influenced by Gustav Klimt and the *Jugendstil*, he is also given space in this book, even though he later exhibited an art style that is closer to Expressionism than *Jugendstil*.

In modern industrial times, with the noise of racing steam engines, factories and the human masses working in them, Egon Schiele was born in

the railway station hall of Tulln, a small, lower Austrian town on the Danube, on 12 June 1890. After his older sisters Melanie (1886-1974) and Elvira (1883-1893), he was the third child of the railway director Adolf Eugen Schiele (1850-1905) and his wife Marie (née Soukoup) (1862-1935). The shadows of three male stillbirths were a precursor for the only boy, who in his third year of life would lose his ten-year-old sister Elvira. The high infant mortality rate was the lot of former times, a fate that Schiele's later work and his pictures of women would characterise.

In 1900, he attended the grammar school in Krems. But he was a poor pupil who constantly took refuge in his drawings, which his enraged father would burn. In 1902, Schiele's father sent his son to the regional grammar and upper secondary school in Klosterneuburg. The young Schiele had a difficult childhood marked by his father's ill health. He suffered from syphilis, which, according to family chronicles, he is said to have contracted while on his honeymoon as a result of a visit to a bordello in Triest. His wife fled from the bedroom during the wedding night and the marriage was only consummated on the fourth day, on which he infected her also. Despair characterised Schiele's father, who retired early and sat at home dressed in his service uniform in a state of mental confusion. In the summer of 1904, stricken by increasing paralysis, he tried to throw himself out of a window. He finally died after a long period of suffering on New Year's Day in 1905. The father, who during a fit of insanity burned all his railroad stocks, left his wife and children destitute. An uncle, Leopold Czihaczek, chief inspector of the imperial and royal railway, assumed joint custody of 15-year-old Egon, for whom he planned the traditional family role of railroad worker.

Egon Schiele, *Sunflower I*, 1908.
Oil on cardboard, 44 x 33 cm.
Landesmuseum Niederösterreich,
St. Pölten.

During this time, young Schiele wore second-hand clothing handed down from his uncle and stiff white collars made from paper. It seems that Schiele had been very close to his father, for he, too, possessed a certain talent for drawing, collected butterflies and minerals, and was drawn to the natural world. Years later, Schiele wrote to his sister:

> […] I have, in fact, experienced a beautiful spiritual occurrence today, I was awake, yet spellbound by a ghost who presented himself to me in a dream before waking, so long as he spoke with me, I was rigid and speechless.

Unable to accept the death of his father, Schiele let him rise again in visions. He reported that his father had been with him and spoken to him at length. In contrast, distance and misunderstanding characterised his relationship with his mother who, living in dire financial straits, expected her son to support her; instead, the eldest sister would work for the railroad. However, Schiele, who had been pampered by women in his childhood, claimed to be "an eternal child". By a stroke of fate, painter Karl Ludwig Strauch (1875-1959) instructed the gifted youth in draftsmanship; the artist Max Kahrer of Klosterneuburg looked after the boy as well. In 1906, at the age of only sixteen, Schiele passed the entrance examination for the general art class at the Academy of Visual Arts in Vienna on his first attempt. Even his strict uncle, in whose household Schiele now took his midday meals, sent a telegram to Schiele's mother: "Passed".

His sister, four years his junior, was a compliant subject for him. The nude study of the fiery redhead with the small belly, fleshy bosom and tousled pubic hair is his younger sister Gertrude (1894-1981). In another watercolour, Gerti reclines backwards, still fully clothed with black stockings and shoes, and lifts the black hem of her dress from under which the red orifice of her body appears. Schiele draws no bed, no chair, only the provocative gesture of his sister's body offering itself (*Reclining Girl in a Dark Blue Dress***,** c. 143).

At the same time as Sigmund Freud was postulating that self-discovery occurs by means of erotic experiences, and "the urge to look" emerges as a spontaneous sexual expression within the child, young Egon recorded confrontations with the opposite sex on paper. He incorporated erotic games of discovery and an unabashed interest in the genitalia of his model into his nude studies; the forbidden gaze, searching for the opened female vagina beneath the rustling of the skirt hem and white lace. Gerti, with her freckled skin, green eyes, and red hair, is the prototype of all the later women and models of Schiele.

Schiele's roots can be found in the *Jugendstil* of the Viennese Secession. Like many other artists who joined the movement, he followed the famous and charismatic Gustav Klimt. Schiele met Klimt in 1907 and they immediately befriended each other. Klimt even modelled for one of Schiele's sketches. Schiele played to his strength by employing his exceptional skill in

manipulating the composition and thus creating works with a tense expressiveness. He was deeply convinced of his own artistic importance and thus achieved more in his short life than many other artists have in a long one.

Egon Schiele,
Reclining Girl in a Dark Blue Dress, 1910.
Gouache, watercolour and pencil,
45 x 31.3 cm. Private collection.

Schiele slowly veered away from *Jugendstil* and more towards Expressionism. This is most obvious when comparing Klimt's *Kiss* with any painting that his former protégée created at the same time. Klimt's painting was exhibited in 1908 as the central piece in a special hall of the *Kunstschau* (Art Show) which also displayed another 16 of his more recent paintings. *The Kiss* was the culmination of a development that had begun with two opulent wall paintings, the *Beethoven Frieze* from 1902 and the wall mosaics which he created between 1905 and 1909 as decoration for the dining room of Josef Hofmann's *Palais Stoclet* in Brussels.

Although the painting was already regarded as a sumptuous icon of sensuality, it was still not decorative enough to be bought by the government.

The painting shows a magical, ethereal dreamscape in which a man is embracing a woman who seems to fall unconscious at the touch of lips. They are surrounded by glimmering gold, silver and minute blossoms. The “biomorphic” shape of the halo-like aura which surrounds the couple alludes to the blossoming of sexual passion and serves the religious function of an altar at the same time. Klimt himself did not bother to hide the subtle eroticism of his painting. Some of his friends (including Schiele) explained that the broad back of the man is not only representative of his potency but is also supposed to look like the underside of a phallus.

Egon Schiele,
Portrait of Gerti Schiele, 1909.
Oil, silver, gold-bronze paint and
pencil on canvas, 139.5 x 140.5 cm.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Unlike Klimt, Schiele found his models on the streets: young girls of the proletariat and prostitutes; he preferred the child-woman androgynous types. The thin, gaunt bodies of his models characterised lower-class status, while the full-bosomed, luscious ladies of the bourgeoisie expressed their class through well-fed corpulence. Yet, the attitude of the legendary Empress "Sissi" is symptomatic of a time in which the conventional image of women began to change. She indeed bore the desired offspring; however, she rebelled against the maternal role expected of her. The ideal of a youthful figure nearly caused her to become anorexic. At the same time, she shocked Viennese court society not only with her unconventional riding excursions, but also in that she wore her clothing without the prescribed stockings.

Around the time of the *fin de siècle*, Schiele portrayed young working class girls. The number of prostitutes in Vienna was among the highest per capita of any European city. Working-class women were where upper-class gentlemen found the defenceless objects of their desire, which they did not find in their own wives. The young, gaunt bodies in Schiele's nude drawings almost stir pity; red blotches cover their thin skin and skeleton-like hands. Their bodies are tensed; however, the red genitalia are full and voracious. Like little animals, they lie in wait for the lustful gaze of the beholder. Despite their young age, Schiele's models are aware of their own erotic radiance and know how to skilfully pose. The masturbating gesture of the hand on the vagina accompanies the provocative gaze of the model. Contrary to the hygienic taboos of the upper class, for example, not to linger overly long while washing the lower body and not to allow oneself to be viewed in the nude, Schiele's drawings testify to a simple body consciousness and a matter-of-fact attitude. For the lower levels of society, "love for sale" pertained to earning one's daily bread.

Schiele's productive life scarcely extended beyond ten years, yet during this time he produced 334 oil paintings and 2,503 drawings (according to Jane Kallir, New York. 1990). He painted portraits and still-lifes, as well as land and townscapes. However, he became truly famous for his draftsmanship. Even his most scant sketches are the result of his extraordinary skill of observation. Similar to many other artists of his age, he deeply analyses his inner life and his subjects. According to expressionist ideas this first introspective step is what truly defines the artistic process of creation.

While Sigmund Freud exposed the repressed pleasure principles of upper-class Viennese society, which put its women into corsets and bulging gowns and delegated them a static and lone role as future mothers, Schiele bares his models. His nude studies penetrate brutally into the privacy of his models and finally confront the viewer with his or her own sexuality.

The photograph of Schiele on his deathbed depicts the 28-year-old looking asleep, his gaunt body completely emaciated, his head resting on his bent arm; the similarity to his drawings is astounding. Because of the danger of

infection, his last visitors were able to communicate with the Spanish flu-infected Schiele only by way of a mirror, which was set up on the threshold between his room and the parlour.

On October 31, three days after the death of his wife who was six months pregnant, Schiele also died from Spanish flu. Three days later, on 3 November 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire capitulated. Earlier in the same year, 1918, Schiele designed a mausoleum for himself and his wife. Did he know, he who had so often distinguished himself as a person of foresight, of his impending death?

Egon Schiele, *Sunflowers*, 1911.
Pencil and watercolour on paper,
44.5 x 30.5 cm. Albertina, Vienna.

Other Viennese Artists

Some of the most important artists of the era have already been mentioned in the section that addressed the origins of the Viennese Secession. Some names remain to be added, however – there is no guarantee of completeness. There is Carl Moll, who is mostly known for his landscapes of Nussdorf, a suburb of Vienna. Max Kurzweil lived for three years in Paris in order to study the Impressionists before joining the Secession in Vienna. Ernst Stöhr was not only a painter but also a poet and wrote several precise and jolting articles in *Ver Sacrum*. Wilhelm List was the managing director of *Ver Sacrum* from 1900 to 1902, a task that was not easy, as artistic circles knew him mainly for landscape and portrait paintings. The aforementioned Max Klinger was also

part of the group. Finally there was Josef Anton Engelhardt, whose international contacts cultivated through extensive travel helped the Secession to establish contact with kindred artists all over Europe and to invite them to exhibitions in Vienna.

Egon Schiele, *The Dancer Moa*, 1911.
Pencil, watercolour and gouache on paper,
47.8 x 31.5 cm. Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Josef Hoffmann,
Fabric design: *Kiebitz*, 1910-1915.
Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshop). no 365.

WIENER WERKSTÄTTE

In an 1899 review of a study concerning a newly erected cemetery chapel in the Viennese district of Währig, Hermann Bahr wrote:

> […] All of Wagner and his art can be summarised in these words: overcoming the "thoughtless image" through a means of construction that is coherent with the appearance of modern humanity. If you remember the most recent exhibition in Munich, in our Secession or even in Dresden and compare them with older exhibitions, you will notice that this "image" is more and more replaced by chairs, tables and cabinets, whole furnishings, simply a thousand things for daily usage […].

A few members of the Viennese Secession had been contemplating the current condition of Austrian craftwork for years and found it severely lacking. In 1903, these artists decided to form the *Wiener Werkstätte*, a so-called *Produktiv-Gemeinschaft von Kunsthandwerkern in Wien* (Productive Community of Artisans in Vienna), which would last until 1932. They were essentially following in the footsteps of a development that had begun with the 19th century *Arts and Crafts Movement* in England. As already discussed in previous chapters, the movement experienced its zenith between 1880 and 1920 and was most influenced by painter, architect, and artisan William Morris and art historian John Ruskin. In Germany, a similarly minded development resulted in the foundation of the *Deutscher Werkund* and later, the *Bauhaus*.

Ludwig Hevesi enthusiastically welcomed the event in an article from 21 January 1905:

> […] Today, Der Kunstwanderer presents as a novelty in this year's series, the *Wiener Werkstätte*. This unusal but laudable undertaking is one of the most joyous developments in Vienna's modern craftwork scene. It is especially remarkable since this project was set in motion by private citizens basing their decision on the righteousness and common sense of their own principles. We are facing a successful initiative of pragmatic idealists which no one would have dared to attempt to start a few years ago.
>
> In secrecy, without the noisiness that is supposedly typical of craftwork, an artistic focal point has been created that is focused on reasonable, aesthetic and especially honest work with various materials. The principle of honesty that has been the mark of this new group from the very beginning, had nearly been lost in the current age of the machine and European-American mass production (according to the motto "cheap and bad" – as we have

> seen with [German mechanical engineer Franz Reuleaux (1829-1905)]). The only country where it still could have been found was Japan.
>
> The desire for honesty in the applied arts was ultimately the catalyst for the change. The *Wiener Werkstätte* is today – and we want to say "hopefully" – just a beautiful beginning. It bears the seed for a healthy school for artisanship and artisans and thus also for the consuming public […].

Josef Hoffmann took on the artistic direction of the *Wiener Werkstätte.* As professor for architecture at the *Kunstgewerbeschule*, he had already worked with Koloman Moser before their *Werkstätte*-cooperation. They were joined by Fritz Waerndorfer, an industrialist and patron of the arts who volunteered to attend to the financial details of the venture, since artists were said to not have a very good comprehension of commercial issues back then; it was Hermann Bahr who introduced the two artists to Waerndorfer.

Josef Hoffmann,
Chair for Hugo Koller, c. 1907.
Kunsthaus Zug, Stiftung Sammlung Kamm, Zug.

Josef Hoffmann,
Seven-Balls chair, c. 1906.
Executed by Jacob & Josef Kohn.
Beechwood, stained black, partly bent and
lathe-turned, molded laminated wood,
109 x 45 x 44 cm. Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Josef Hoffmann,
Padded chair, 1901. Kunsthaus Zug,
Stiftung Sammlung Kamm, Zug.

Josef Hoffmann, Armchair, 1904.
MAK - Österreichisches Museum
für angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

Josef Hoffmann, The logo of the
Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshop).

In an incredibly short amount of time, the *Werkstätte*, with their array of products ranging from Olbrich's cutlery and *Jugendstil*-posters to complete furnishings for residential houses, were successful to such a degree that they had to hire a hundred more employees in order to handle the rising demand. Furthermore, they could open branches in Karlsbad (1909), Zurich (1917), and New York (1922). Despite the raging world economic crisis, where even the wealthy had to act shrewdly to keep whatever they had, the *Werkstätte* were able to open another branch in Berlin in 1929. However, not even this sweeping success could prevent the impending end of the *Werkstätte*. Mismanagement and bad decisions paved the way for a declaration of bankruptcy in 1932.

Nevertheless, the legacy remains. The greatest international success of the *Werkstätte* was the *Jugendstil*-mansion of magnate Adolphe Stoclet (1871-1949) which was built according to blueprints from Josef Hoffmann in Brussels. Fernand Khnopff crafted the décor for the music room while Gustav Klimt decorated the dining room with his famous *Stoclet-Frieze*. Today, the *Palais Stoclet* is deservedly part of the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Hevesi wrote an extensive article on the successful period of the *Werkstätte*.

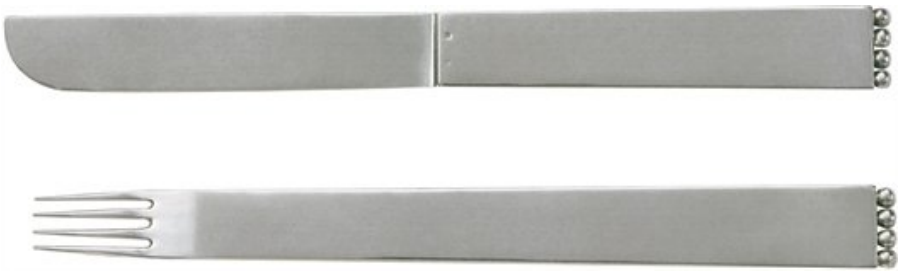
> […] Christmas time also brought considerable success concerning sales. However, as it usually is with Viennese accomplishment, everyone else took notice of its brilliance first before the Viennese admitted acceptance. Strangely enough, the *Wiener Werkstätte* could convince people in Berlin the most. In Berlin, their work is featured and sold in the famous Hohenzollern-department store where several rooms furnished after typical Hoffmann-Moser fashion are showcased (which, just by the way, quickly found imitators).
>
> The leading German art magazines have reviewed and honoured these rooms and their contents one after another. The *Werkstätte* have already been commissioned for more extensive work and now they are working on a complete house-furnishing assignment in Berlin. Even an art patron from Bussels has tasked Professor Hoffmann with the construction of a whole *palais*, a country retreat and a tomb.
>
> […] The visit of the travelling artists in the *Wiener Werkstätte* will be a joyous occasion and an educational experience. Everything they do is interesting and original […].

Ludwig Hevesi did not only review the general reception of the association but also went into detail about the multitude of decorative objects that were exhibited:

> The jewellery was a big success, especially during the Christmas season. It is, beyond all ordinary standards, inventive and chic, while being so lovingly handcrafted that every individual item rightfully carries the mark of its maker. The main materials are silver and semi-precious stones which – in combination – make for novel and delightful effects. Their material compositions make categorisation difficult at best, posing somewhat of a problem for the bureau of assaying. Of course, the impossibility of assaying has never stopped a woman feeling obliged to have an original piece of jewellery donated to her.
>
> Consequently, the most beautiful pieces were sold at Christmas, however there are still enough left to marvel at for an hour. The variety of silver objects is also stunning: baskets, vases, tea sets, bowls, candelabra, and many more. Many of those objects are inlaid with a metal lattice sheet which the workshop has already started to systematically produce. These latticed objects have their very own appeal and are becoming somewhat of a specialty at the moment. The lattices are used in combination with various materials, e.g. a black ebony clock that fills out a silver latticework.

Eduard Josef Wimmer-Wisgrill,
Fabric sample *Ameise* (Ant), c. 1919.
Raw silk, block printed, 22.5 x 30 cm.
Execution: *Wiener Werkstätte* (Vienna Workshop), no 33.
MAK - Österreichisches Museum
für angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.
Photograph by Nathan Murrell.

Koloman Moser,
Lamp with glass rods for the *Salon Flöge*
(Flöge fashion boutique) in Vienna, 1904.
Execution: Wiener Werkstätte.
Silver-coated nickel, glass,
37.5 x 18.5 x 18.5 cm.
Private collection.



Josef Hoffmann, Dessert knife and fork,
Flaches Modell (flat model), c. 1903.
Kunsthaus Zug, Stiftung Sammlung Kamm, Zug.

Furthermore, the wrought metalwork (alpaca etc.) is also popular among buyers. Especially the galvanised tints, e.g. black copper, are awe-inspiring. The cardboard boxes made from marbled paper are almost pre-determined to find their way into households from all walks of life. They are a decidedly refreshing element among the assortment of other decorative objects guaranteed to enliven any room. Some of them have seen truly creative application, like rectangular cases for hatpins.

The invention of charming gadgets is one of the many strengths of the best minds in the *Werkstätte*. They do have the necessary humour for that. Some of the lacquered, wooden figures which were originally conceived as chocolate boxes are so popular in their drollness that people have started using them as entertaining toys for their kids. Moser is the grandmaster of such things. Even tiny wooden boxes painted with similar droll figures are still fascinating eye-catchers.

We can find ample supplies of such small, charming, and lovingly crafted objects in the glass cabinets and glass stands of the salon. It is a pleasure to study this miniature world which is so different from anything you can find on the Graben or the Kohlmarkt[7], or any neighbouring provinces. Although it is only unofficially “applied art” it will still bring honour to its hallmark, the stylised rose of the *Wiener Werkstätte*.

The Most Important Artists of the *Wiener Werkstätte*

Beside Josef Hoffmann, Koloman Moser, and Joseph Maria Olbrich, the group also counted sculptor Richard Luksch (1872-1936), painter and designer Carl Otto Czeschka (1878-1960), Bertold Löffler (1874-1960) as

well as metalworker and sculptor Franz Metzner (1870-1919) among its members. Although Moser, Hoffmann, and Olbrich were mainly responsible for the field of architecture and furniture, they also contributed to all other workfields – glasswork, jewellery, fashion, ceramics, textiles, and the fine arts. With their all-encompassing involvement in the business of the *Werkstätte*, they also carried the burden of success and failure of their venture. On a side note, it should be mentioned that in 1969 a new group was founded with the name *Neue Wiener Werkstätte* (New Viennese Workshop) and still exists today.

Josef Hoffmann, Liqueur glass, wine glass,
carafe, and champagne glass from a service, 1911.
Collection of Dr. Ernst Ploil, Vienna.

Joseph Maria Olbrich,
View and cut of the reception building,
Darmstadt train station, grand hall, 1907.
Multi-coloured photoengraving,
46 x 30.5 cm. Municipal Art Collection,
Institut Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt.

ARCHITECTURE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Foreword

The story of architecture in the 19th century is an exciting tale of grand visions and technical innovation. Ingenious master builders and architects created consummate architecture – truly remarkable feats of creativity, spirit, and intuition. New materials and the discovery of revolutionary composites allowed architecture to expand in the course of the 20th century into awe-inspiringly original and higher dimensions of construction.

Architecture is, similar to sculpture and painting, an art of space. Architecture, however, is first and foremost a question of the creation of a boundary for space. Two vastly different principles of design characterise architecture of the 20th century. Organic, flowing forms stand side to side with the reduced, stylised, and geometrical usage of cubes.

Throughout the centuries, the organic shape has been a constant companion to architecture, sometimes clear-cut and direct, at other times only subtle and supportive. At the beginning of the century, dynamically flowing, expansive volumes dominated the scene. The most prominent examples are the buildings of Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926) in Barcelona and Frank Lloyd Wright's (1867-1959) perpetually melodic realisations of organic buildings.

In the second half of the 19th century, architects like Gustave Eiffel, Sir Joseph Paxton, or Henri Labrouste successfully experimented with glass, steel, and concrete and created trend-setting architecture unlike anything that had been attempted before. They established a practical foundation of architectural knowledge that remained relevant throughout the 20th century; a century that began architecturally with a master builder in the medieval tradition: the Catalan Antoni Gaudí. In medieval gothic tradition, he founded a mason's workshop especially for the construction of his famous life's work, the *La Sagrada Familia* cathedral.

Another example of his progressive concept of architecture is the apartment building *Casa Milá* in Barcelona (1905/1907). Here, the whole architecture seems to be fluid, almost as if it has been stirred up and set in motion. Unfortunately, his vision remained a solitary and often mocked concept, but it nevertheless was an impressive "lookahead" to the expressionist architecture of the 1920s and – in a way – even to the current trend towards the construction of gigantic buildings that grips places like the

Emirates or China.

The flowing ornamental line also played an important role in the architecture of Victor Horta, Belgium's main representative of Art Nouveau. His buildings create the impression of weightlessness both through interior decoration as well as through façade design. The façade of the Solvay-House in Brussels is an example of how to evoke lively, ornamental motion with thin iron elements.

Otto Wagner stands at the crossroads between historicism and modernity. He dreamt of planning a metropolis of the future and developing standardisation and prefabrication procedures for this purpose. At the turn of the 19th century he was one of Vienna's most influential architects; a fact that is supported by the 30 urban train stations, hotels, churches, schools, mansions, monuments, museums and residential houses that he designed. His most famous project is the *Postsparkasse*.

Adolf Loos attacked *Jugendstil*-architects like Josef Maria Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann who created the Viennese Secession together with painter Gustav Klimt. One of Hoffmann's early accomplishments is the *Genesungsheim Purkersdorf*, which was built in 1903/1904. The building is designed in a fashion that comes close to Loos' concept of architecture – freed from all unnecessary embellishments. One year later, he began working on a project that would become his magnum opus, the *Palais Stoclet* in Brussels.

Morris & Co., *The Great Parlour*, 1893.
Polychrome timber ceiling and
furniture provided by Morris & Co. along
with some 17th and 18th century pieces.
Wightwick Manor, Wightwick Bank.

England and Belgium

William Morris
(Walthamstow, 1834-1896, London)

The Arts and Crafts Movement and William Morris introduced an autochthonous style of architecture in England. The original idea of the movement was, as the name indicates, a fusion of art and work. Initially a purely English movement, it slowly outgrew its commercial roots over the duration of forty years. Sometimes mentioned in the same breath as the era of industrialisation, this only holds true for its last ten years. Generally, the movement is thought to have begun in 1860 when William Morris commissioned Philip Speakman Webb to build the *Red House* in Bexleyheath. He designed and created the interior decoration and furniture himself to demonstrate his skill as an artisan.

Philip Speakman Webb
(Oxford, 1831-1915, Worth/Sussex)

The architect Philip Speakman Webb was one of the most important members of the movement and thus occasionally also regarded as the "father of Arts and Crafts-architecture". Additionally, he was one of the most brilliant architects in England at the time and did not have any reservations about using contrasting building materials for his projects. For the *Red House*, for example, he combined the clean red bricks of the exterior walls with the pure white interior walls. In 1904, the previously mentioned art critic Hermann Muthesius, who lived in England from 1896 to 1903, commented on Webb's *Red House*:

> […] The first private residence that has been built according to a new artistic culture, the very first building where interior and exterior were conceptualised as a whole and the first entry into the history of the modern house […].

Webb remained true to the concept he had chosen to the last commission as several of his houses show. One of these last commissions was the beautiful estate mansion *Standen* in East Grinstead in West Sussex, which he created for London lawyer James Beale and his family. Today, the building belongs to the National Trust of England. Although he – in contrast to his friend William Morris – never put his philosophy of architecture into writing, his influence can be seen in various buildings, pieces of furniture, and stained-glass windows to this day.

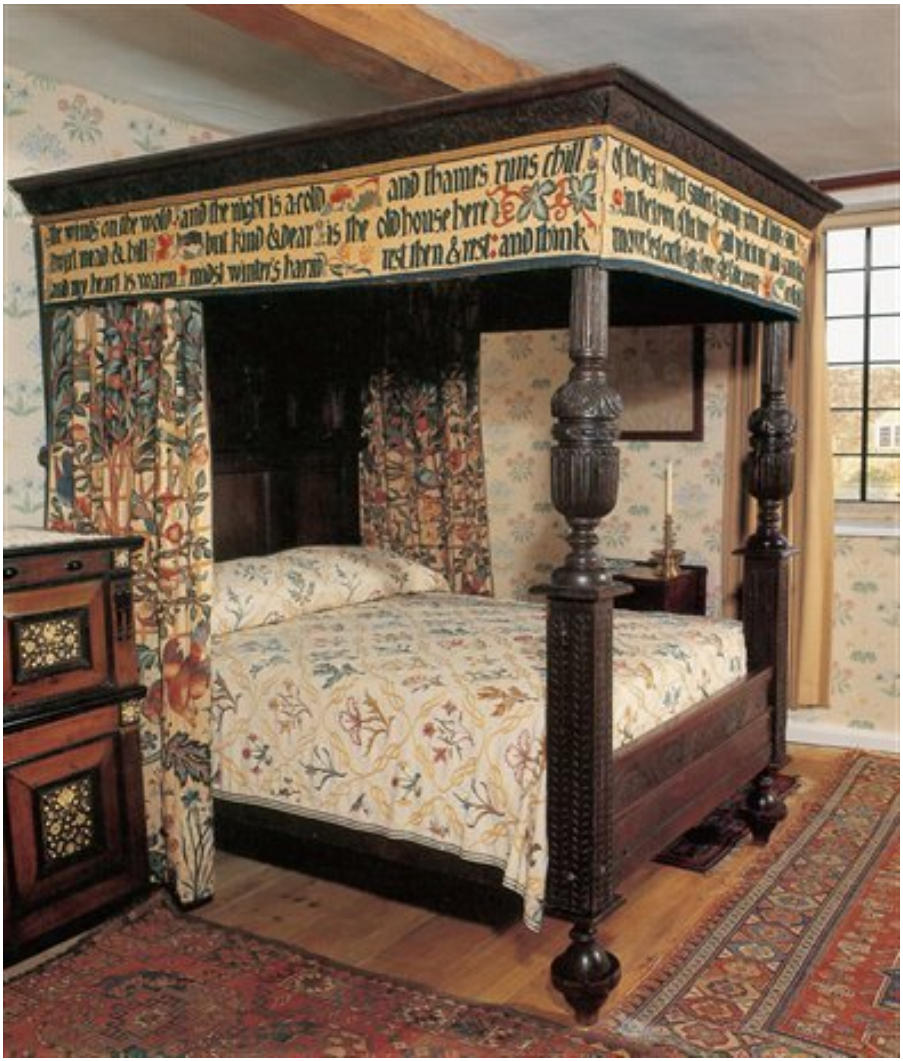
After his last commission he resigned from his active work as an architect, which made room for other, younger architects to take over the reigns with new ideas and original designs, and can thus also be considered to have made

an important contribution to the Art Nouveau movement. One of these young innovators was without a doubt the brilliant architect, painter, and designer Henry van de Velde (1864-1957) from Belgium. One of his most famous artworks, that he created as a designer, is the logo of the National Railway Company of Belgium which is still in use today; the “B” that is enclosed by an oval.

William Morris,
The "Chèvrefeuille" Room, 1887.
Wightwick Manor, Wightwick Bank.

Philip Speakman Webb (Design)**,**
The Red House, 1860.
Bexleyheath, London.

Philip Speakman Webb
(Design), *Standen*, 1891.
East Grinstead, West Sussex, England.



William Morris,
Four-poster bed, 1862.
Kelmscott Manor, Kelmscott, England.

Henry van de Velde
(Antwerp, 1863-1957, Zurich)

The Belgian architect and designer Henry Clement van de Velde started his career as a painter at first but changed his specialisation and studied design and architecture. From 1907 onwards, he was a member of the *Deutscher Werkbund* and designed dinnerware for the Meissen porcelain manufacture, as well as clothing and interior decoration. In Weimar, he founded not only the Grand-Ducal School of Arts and Crafts but also designed and constructed the required building. With the school and several buildings in Belgium, like the Book Towers (1932/1936) for the university in Ghent, he demonstrated his deep understanding of modern architecture. He was also commissioned to build the *Werkbund*-Theatre (1914) – also meant to be an exhibition centre – which was unfortunately closed down three months after the conclusion of the construction work. Van de Velde's hallmark was his rejection of all previous trends and his dedication to the most progressive style of architecture of his time.

Victor Horta
(Ghent, 1861-1947, Etterbeek)

Another, previously mentioned, Art Nouveau architect who was also active in Belgium was Victor Horta. After finishing his studies at Ghent's *Academie des Beaux Arts*, he travelled to Paris. Although he saw the Impressionists at work and the old masters in the grand museums, it was Paris' modern steel architecture that impressed the young Belgian, particularly the Eiffel Tower or the metro entrances with their naturalistic wrought-cast iron elements. He processed these experiences by developing a conceptual design for the Royal Botanical Gardens, with one of his professors in Brussels.

With the onset of his independence, he first ventured into the construction of residential houses – one of these is the *Maison & Atelier Horta* (1895-1898) where his studio was housed and which is nowadays a mecca for tourists.

Consequently, he designed these houses in an unrepressed *Jugendstil*-manner, i.e. as holistic works of art. Horta's most famous houses are the *Hôtel Tassel* (grand hall), which he built for a Belgian scientist, the *Hôtel Solvay* (main salon), built for an industrial magnate, and the *Hôtel van Eetvelde* (pp. 174, 175) for a high ranking administrative official of the Belgian Congo. As of 2000, all four houses are part of the UNESCO World Heritage list. The explanatory statement reads:

> [...] The four city houses – *Hôtel Tassel*, *Hôtel Solvay*, *Hôtel van Eetvelde* and *Maison & Atelier Horta*; all located in Brussels – that were designed by architect Victor Horta, on of the initiators

> of the *Jugendstil*, are among the most remarkable examples of pioneer-architecture in the 19th century. The stylistic revolution that they represent is visible in the generously designed space that allows for ample exposure of light as well as the way the curved decorative lines correspond to the structure of the building […].

Horta also designed houses for public use, among them the three-storey *Maison du Peuple* (1896/1899) for the Belgian Labour Party (*Socialistische Partij Anders* today, after branching off twice). The façade of the building was rendered from a glass-steel construction. The building was demolished in 1965. At roughly the same time he planned and built a department store for the textile merchant Charles Waucquez which, after restauration, was repurposed as a sequential art museum in 1989 and now houses the Belgian Comic Strip Centre.

William Morris (original design),
Philip Webb (modifications) and
Dante Gabriel Rossetti (original painter
of the three doors), salon with settee and bookcase in
The Red House, 1887. Bexleyheath, London.

Philip Webb (Design),
Corridor of *The Red House* opening
to the servants' quarters, 1860.
Bexleyheath, London.

Henry Van de Velde,
Bloemenwerf, 1895. Brussels.

France

Hector Guimard
(Lyon, 1867-1942, New York City)

In France, Hector Guimard was the main pioneer of Art Nouveau. His seven-storey apartment building *Castel Béranger* (entryways on pp. 178, 179), with its wrought-iron entrance gate flanked by two florally-decorated Corinthian pillars and the inventive water tap pump in the courtyard, is a prime example of Art Nouveau architecture. Guimard's best-known work, however, are the famous wrought-iron signs that mark the entrances and exits of the Paris metro network. The plant-green coated signs were meant to alleviate the people's anxiety about the underground and the loud trains in 1890s Paris.

He left more traces of his architectural style scattered throughout Paris. For example, a residential house for Italian industrialist Paul Mezzara, which today is part of the ministry of education, or the Agoudas Hakehilos Synagogue (also known as the Guimard Synagogue).

Art Nouveau influence, in general, can be admired in many Parisian

establishments, such as the restaurant Au Petit Riche in the 9th arrondissement or the Bouillon Racine in the 6th arrondissement as well as the *Montparnasse 1900*, which had once been the store of an oil-merchant.

Henry Van de Velde (design),
Candelabra, 1898-1899.
Silver-plated bronze, 58.6 x 51.1 cm.
Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels.

Austria

The Architecture of the *Ringstraße* in Vienna

The period of extensive construction and re-construction in the 19th century that changed the cityscape of Vienna was already discussed before. The *Ringstraße*, however, was only mentioned in passing, which is why it will be addressed in this chapter in further detail. The area surrounding the street was one of the most crucial areas in the re-construction of Vienna's city centre. In the course of 20 years, from 1871 until 1891, several new important buildings were built adjacent to the street: the Austrian Parliament building (1874), the

neo-gothic town hall (1883), both museums for natural history and art history (1889 and 1891), the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (1877), the *Burgtheater* (1888) – one of the oldest German straight theatres – and the general university (1884). Today, the complete quarter around the *Ringstraße* is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The architects that were involved in the planning of the quarter were Ludwig Christian von Förster (1797-1863; specialised in the construction of churches and palaces), Heinrich Freiherr von Ferstel (1828-1883; construction of church, museum and university buildings), Friedrich Freiheer von Schmidt (1825-1891; construction of the town hall) and Eduard van der Nüll (1812-1868), who committed suicide after his realisation of the State Opera received massive criticism from all quarters.

The Secessionists were granted a plot by the city council for the duration of ten years at the *Ringstraße* as well. Whatever building they meant to erect there was destined to be a provisory exhibition pavilion. The original design sketch for the building was made by Klimt, who was succeded by Olbrich in the planning for the Secession house; Olbrich's first sketch (pp. 78, 79) met harsh criticism, however. Finally, the plans for the building could only be realised after the architectural sketch was amended and the building plot was moved to the *Friedrichstraße*, where the Secessionists had a larger plot to work with. In March 1889, the cornerstone was laid and in the record-breaking time of six months the building with its dome of interwoven golden laurels and cube-shaped wings was finished. The building received the simple name *Secession*.

Otto Koloman Wagner
(Penzing district of Vienna, 1841-1918, Vienna)

The only mistress of art is necessity.

Otto Wagner, son of a reputable clerk at the Austro-Hungarian royal court, started his studies at the Vienna University of Technology but soon switched to the Academy of Fine Arts where he met August Sicard von Siccardsburg and Eduard van der Nüll. From 1857 to 1862, he studied at the *Berliner Bauakademie*,

All of his training was to be the perfect preparation to end the eclecticism of his successors and to prepare the way for stylistic change and the introduction of new building materials. Early in his career, he competed in various state- or industry-sponsored contests, which enabled him to contribute to the hydrological regulation of the Danube River and the construction of the city railway. His early architectural signature can be seen in the transparent glass-floor of the counter area in the *Länderbank* (1884) or the courtyard summer swimming pool of the *Dianabad* (1888).

First influences of Wagner's *Jugendstil*-ideas can be seen in the façade of a

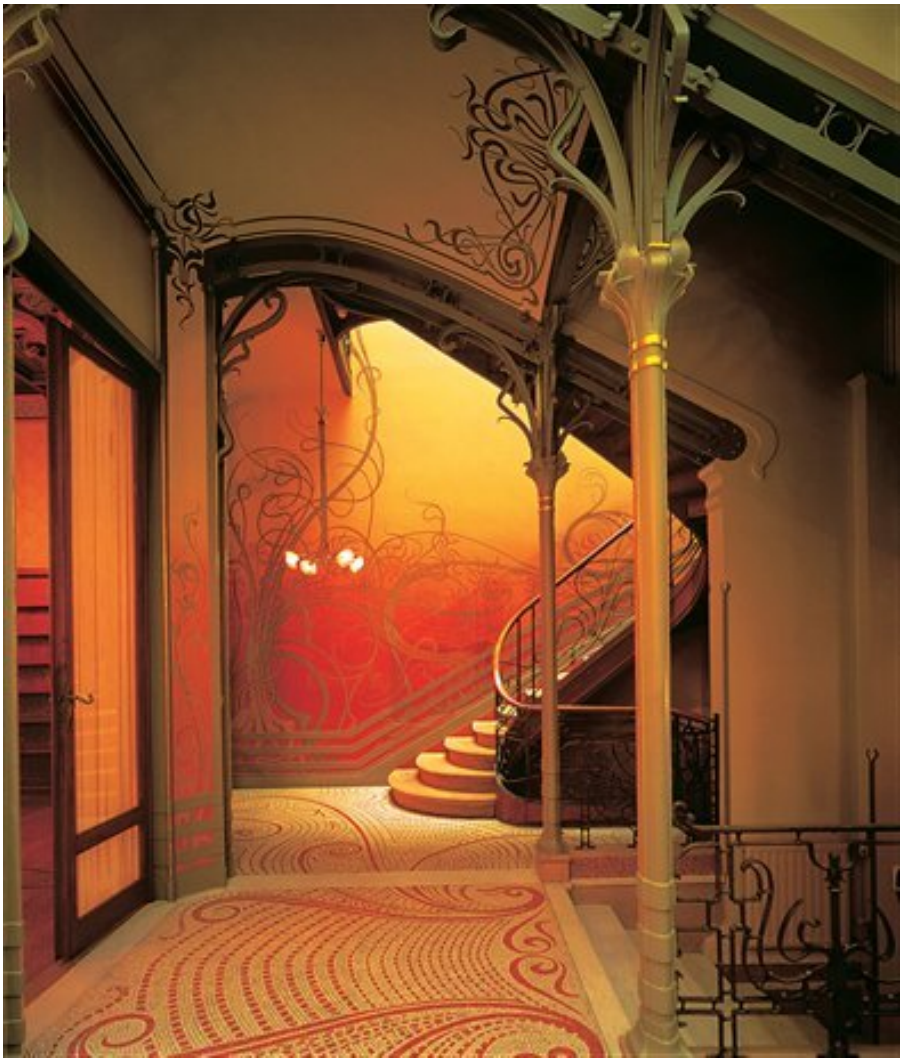
five-storey apartment building, the so-called *Majolikahaus* (1898): floral patterns and vines adorn the walls while a green, wrought-iron fence with sprouting iron pillars to support the balconies of the second floor, encloses the whole ground floor. Not all of his architectural projects were decorative, however. Directly beside a rounded corner-house at the *Linke Wienzeile*, which features a similar wrought-iron fence and balcony structure as well as golden ornaments from Koloman Moser, a completely unembellished façade hides another Wagner building which he temporarily even used as an apartment for himself.

The full extent of his concept of modern architecture, however, can be observed in the example of two completely different building types: the covered platforms of the city railway stations and the *Postsparkasse* of Vienna. The prime example for the former is the steel construction of the Karlsplatz station which features a fusion of *Jugendstil* and baroque elements. The latter, the *Postsparkasse*, impressed with its floor of glass tiles that revealed the rooms underneath and – in perfect harmony – a glass ceiling that replaced the usual, traditional counter-room ceilings. The hall of the *Postsparkasse* was a complete opposite to the previous architecture of buildings that – in essence – represented money and power. The whole complex with its quadrangular courtyard takes up a whole block; its true size is only fully appreciable by aerial view.

Victor Horta, *Hôtel Solvay*,
view from main salon, 1895. Brussels.

Victor Horta, *Hôtel Van Eetvelde*,
façade, 1895. Brussels.

Victor Horta, *Hôtel Van Eetvelde*,
view from living room, 1895. Brussels.



Victor Horta, *Hôtel Tassel*,
grand hall on main floor, 1893. Brussels.

A completely different kind of building is the Roman-Catholic Church of St. Leopold (1904-1907), probably the world's only *Jugendstil*-church. Since the church was part of the Steinhof Psychiatric Hospital, the requirements for its construction were different from regular churches. The building was erected on a hillside below the Gallitzinberg and is thus visible for miles. The decorative elements of the church make it an impressive sight: four pillars extend beyond the awning, four golden statues of angels are mounted on top of these pillars, two small bell-towers carry the enthroned bronze figures of the patron saints of Lower Austria, and a gold-plated copper dome extends into a thimble-like crown which holds a cross. Some people scoff at the structure and mockingly claim that the dome looks rather like a halved lemon that extends into a lantern. The interior decoration is from both Koloman Moser and Wagner himself. The stained-glass window above the main entrance displays a sentence underneath that reads "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"[8], and the beautiful figures of seven of fourteen male and female saints who are dispersed over all the church's glass windows. Every single one represents a virtue from the fourteen physical and spiritual virtues of compassion found in the abbreviated catholic catechism. The windows were made by Moser, who also offered to create an altarpiece but was ultimately denied the request by the church board. With the approval of Moser and Wagner, Remigius Geyling (1878-1874) and Leopold Forstner (1878-1936) took over the design and execution of the mosaic. The tabernacle, stoup, and general interior decoration were all designed by Wagner, who once more proved his brilliance by creating a truly holistic work of art.

The church was inaugurated by Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria (1863-1914) – whose assassination in Sarajevo would later spark World War I – a staunch antagonist of the *Jugendstil*. Consequently he did not even deign to mention Wagner in his inaugural speech and used his influence to revoke any future court commissions for Wagner. The Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse* also used the opportunity for some jeering mockery: "Is it not a sweet irony of fate that the first reasonable building in grand manner that the Secession spawned in Vienna, has been built for the insane?"

Among Wagner's other architectural works are the *Nußdorfer Wehr*, a barrage with a lock for the Danube river, an administrative building (1894/1898), as well as the Kaiserbadschleuse weir – which looks rather downtrodden today – that also houses a warehouse for the storage of the metal sluices for the Danube Canal.

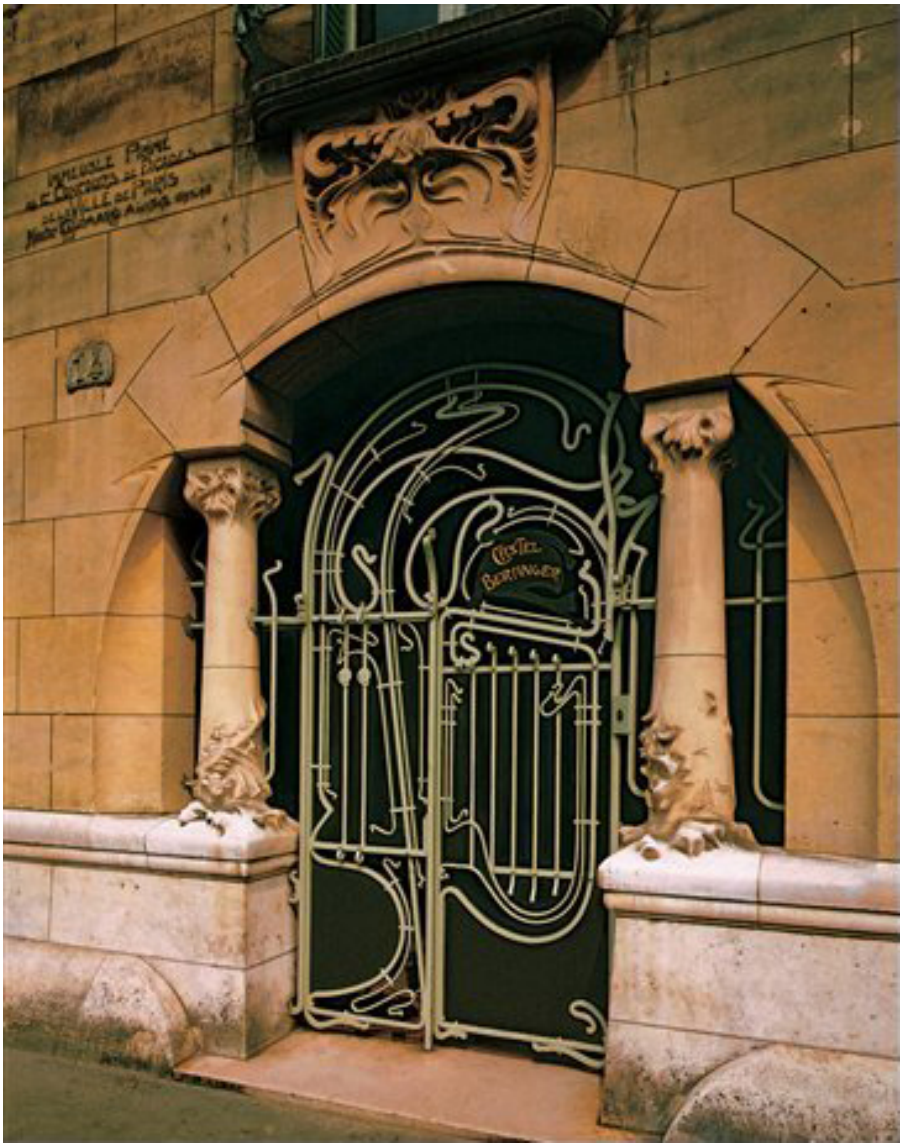
Wagner's buildings were more than just temporary phenomena of a fleeting art style. They, in themselves and with the inspiration they gave to young architects, represented Vienna's aforementioned transition from historicism to modernity *par excellence*. His pupils did not only use his ideas but also began to develop them further. Two of his pupils were the already

discussed architects Joseph Maria Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann. Globally, his ideas spread with the publications *Modern Architecture: A Guidebook for His Students to This Field of Art* (1896) – a collection of all his lectures – and *Die Baukunst unserer Zeit* (*The Architecture of our Age*) (1914).

Otto Wagner was also a professor at the academy and *Oberbaurat* (Chief Councillor for Architecture) of the city of Vienna; a position that was eminently respectable, even more so than his position at the university. Furthermore, he was court councillor and honorary president of several national and international artists' associations, such as the *Gesellschaft österreichischer Architekten* (Association of Austrian Architects) and the Royal Institute of British Architects. The city of Vienna honoured him by naming several plazas and buildings after him and erecting a statute at the Academy of Fine Arts. Austria printed his portrait on the second-highest bill, the 500-Schilling, which consequently also features the *Postsparkasse* on the reverse side.

Wagner's vitality was not restricted to professional matters alone. He had three sons and four daughters with three women: Josefine, Louise, and Sophia (whom he, however, had not married prior to the birth of their children). Wagner died in April 1918 of an incurable dermatological disease.

Hector Guimard,
Castel Béranger, detail of entry and
door to courtyard, 1895. Paris.



Hector Guimard, *Castel Béranger*,
main entrance, 1895-1898. Paris.

Otto Wagner, *Postsparkasse*
(Post Office Savings Bank),
Main façade, 1904-1906.
Wagner: Werk Museum Postsparkasse, Vienna.

Otto Wagner, *Postsparkasse*
(Post Office Savings Bank),
Main banking hall, 1904-1906.
Wagner: Werk Museum Postsparkasse, Vienna.

Joseph Maria Olbrich
(Troppau, 1867-1908, Dusseldorf)

Joseph Maria Olbrich was born in Troppau, modern-day Opava in the Czech Republic (still Austrian Silesia in 1867). His father had an unusual combination of professions; he was a confectioner, wax manufacturer, and brickworks-owner. Since his parents had planned an academic career for their oldest son – Olbrich had two younger brothers – he attended the grammar school for a few years before dropping out and starting an apprenticeship as a bricklayer. He also worked as architectural draughtsman before enrolling at a state vocational school where he attended a class in architecture. After four years he finished school and passed his final exams with distinction.

After a short sojourn in Troppau, he took up studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and studied under Karl Freiheer von Hasenauer (1833-1894), who had garnered a reputation with his neo-baroque buildings at the *Ringstraße* (two museums, the façade of the *Burgtheater*, and the Hofburg Palace). After his return from trips to Italy and Tunisia, he caught Otto Wagner's attention, who hired him to work in his architectural company. Olbrich turned out to be such a skilful and successful employee that Wagner would have very much liked to pair him off with his daughter just to keep him in the company.

Olbrich joined the Viennese Secession and was assigned the planning and construction of the association building on the plot that they were granted by

the city council in 1897. The financial backing for the construction came from different sponsors, such as the Austrian-Jewish Industrialist family of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1881-1951), who was the most generous of all contributors. Olbrich planned and built the house in a style which would today be called "White Cube", motivated by a principle he had once established: "Walls should be white and polished, holy and chaste."

Hermann Bahr, whose house (1899/1900) had been built by Olbrich, reported on the construction work of the Secession:

> […] If you come by the Vienna River these days, where the street behind the academy leads to the theatre, you can see a throng of people crowding a building. Workers, craftsmen, and women who are supposed to be on their way to work, stop to puzzle at the building, unable to avert their gaze. They gawp and discuss the wondrous thing. It seems strange to them, something that they have not seen before; it alienates them. Earnest and thoughtful they leave, turn around to have another glance at the building but are unable to detach themselves and hesitate to return to their work. And it goes on like that throughout the whole day.

The poster for the first exhibition, that was held from 26 March through 15 June 1898, was designed by Gustav Klimt and shows a nude Theseus fighting a Minotaur, symbolising the fight of the Secession against established, conservative tastes and their representatives.

Franzensring (Dr. Karl Renner-Ring today), Vienna.
The parliament building in the foreground was built by Theophil Hansen (1874-1884), the town hall in the background by Friedrich von Schmidt (1872-1885).
Photograph, between 1885 and 1900.

Bureau of Otto Wagner
(presumably in collaboration with J.M. Olbrich),
View of the Wiener Stadtbahn-station
Akademiestraße at Karlsplatz.
Excerpt from a sheet representing the view of
the station Gumpendorferstraße, 1898.
Pen, watercolour, gold colour and white
highlights on paper, 65 x 46 cm.
Wien Museum, Vienna.

After the building was finished, Bahr wrote another article describing the building:

> […] If you come from the direction of the Karlskirche, to the plaza and behold the house with its crown gleaming in the sun, you will feel that it is a glittering island with its white and gold and green, a peaceful island in the bustle of the city, a refuge from the daily plight into the eternity of art. Olbrich studied at

> our academy. A student of Hasenauer, he was awarded the imperial honorific award as well as the special award of the school in his second year. In his third year he was sent to Italy with a scholarship in his pocket. Otto Wagner brought him back from Sicily to help him with the city railway project; he returned in the May of 1894 with a detour through Tunisia. He was a brilliant apprentice but he slowly started to form his own ideas: Wagner's principles are still very much alive in him, but now he is giving them a personal note: liberated, more courageous, purer […].

Being as he was, Olbrich could never remain inactive for long, and thus planned and built several other structures in and around Vienna in the four years between 1897 and 1900. Among those building projects were the house of Hermann Bahr, and a clubhouse for the rather particular State and Court Officials of Vienna's Cycling Association. The clubhouse lies, somewhat hidden, in the Prater and has only recently been re-discovered, even though it had been used by a tennis club and another cyclists' club for years. Viennese experts call it an "architectural jewel"[9]. Olbrich went on to build a centre for the Imperial Horticultural Society of Vienna, a café in the Low Austrian regional capital St. Pölten and another residential house in the market town Hinterbühl, south of Vienna. Considering the travel conditions in 19th century Austria and the consequent burden for Olbrich, his work becomes all the more impressive.

Bureau of Otto Wagner
(presumably in collaboration with J.M. Olbrich),
Plan for the new construction of
the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.
Sheet representing the central block of
the overall complex, 1897/1898. Pencil,
Indian ink, coloured pencil, watercolour, gold colour
and white highlights on paper, 104.1 x 70.7 cm.
Wien Museum, Vienna.

In the first years after the Secession exhibition, also in 1899, he was occupied with several projects to build mansions and residential houses when Grand Duke Ernest Louise of Hesse called him to Darmstadt to help shape his artistic ambitions and to establish the Darmstadt Artists' Colony. He commissioned Olbrich with the realisation of the building plans that the architect had put on display during the exhibition. Naturally, Olbrich was exhilarated by the assignment and wrote in the next exhibition catalogue:

[…] and there we will show everything we are capable of; from the whole of the compound to the tiniest detail. Everything will be ruled by the same idea, the same spirit; the streets and the gardens, the palaces and the cottages, the tables and the seats, the candlesticks and the spoons; all of them an expression of the same sensation. In the centre, like a temple or a sacred grove, will be a house of work, an artisan's workshop and an artist's studio at the same time so that the artist is in the presence of the calming and orderly craftwork and the artisan can witness liberating and purifying art at all times until both of them are one person.[10]

Joseph Maria Olbrich,
Poster for the Second Secession Exhibition, 1898.
Lithograph, 86.2 x 51.2 cm.
Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt.

Olbrich consequently moved to Darmstadt and joined the artist colony in 1899. He was responsible for the construction of the largest part of the *Mathildenhöhe* and the colony. In order to keep him in Darmstadt as long as possible, the Grandduke gave him a chair at the university. Several buildings on the *Mathildenhöhe* can be attributed to him. The *Mathildenhöhe* is, except for the connection through Olbrich, not directly related to the Viennese Secession but since it is often described as the most beautiful *Jugendstil*-ensemble it is worth a short treatment. The buildings that Olbrich designed were:

The *Ernst-Ludwig-Haus* (1900/1901); a shared studio of the artists' colony that displayed similarities to the *Secession* building in Vienna, with its round portal and two statues – male and female – flanking the entrance.

A residential house for artisan Hans Christiansen (1866-1945) that was destroyed during World War II.

A residential house for Carl Keller; destroyed in WWII as well.

Two residential houses, the large *Glückert House* and the small *Glückert House* (1900/1901).

A residential house for sculptor Ludwig Habich (1872-1949) who created the two statues at the entrance of the *Ernst-Ludwig-Haus* and the *Statue of Christopher Columbus* (1897) in Bremerhaven (today replaced by a recast statue).

A double apartment (1901/1902) for the brothers Gustav and Joseph Stade

The *Drei-Häuser-Gruppe* (1903/1904).

The exhibition centre *Haus für Flächenkunst* (1901).

Finally, the *Hochzeitsturm* (Wedding Tower) that Olbrich planned as a monument to the ducal wedding. (1908; because of its resemblance to an open hand, sometimes also called "Five-Finger-Tower").

Like many other master builders both before and after him, Olbrich did not only restrict himself to architecture. He also designed items of furniture, among which was an armchair that was recently auctioned off for a five-digit sum, as well as ceramic dinnerware. Furthermore, he was also asked to help with the interior design and décor of the North German Lloyd-owned post and passenger ship *Kronprinzessin Cecilie* that was named after the last German crown princess of the Empire. His reputation even preceded him in the United States, where he was made an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects.

The list of all his projects, plans, and successful ventures from 1900 to 1908 is indeed very long. Olbrich also published two treatises on architectural theory, *Ideas by Olbrich* (1900) and *Architecture by Olbrich* (1901-1914). His

last projects were the decoration of a room for district court president in Mainz and a department store project in Gelsenkirchen. Since he already had garnered experience with the *Warenhaus Tietz* (1906-1908) in the Königsallee in Dusseldorf, he was well prepared for the Gelsenkirchen project.

One could almost suspect that Olbrich, with his unrelenting work spirit and concurrent projects running in several countries, somehow knew of the premature end of his creative career. He died of leukaemia in Düsseldorf, August 1908.

Joseph Maria Olbrich,
Vienna Secession Building,
1897-1898. Vienna.

Adolf Loos
(Brno, 1870-1933, Kalksburg)

> *The ornament is wasted manpower and thus wasted health* […]
> *Today it also means wasted material and both means wasted capital* […]
> *The modern man, a man with a modern sense does not need the ornament,*
> *he despises it.*
> (Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime*, 1908)

Although Adolf Loos raged and ranted against the *Jugendstil* and the Secession, he was still an influential and important architect in 19th century Vienna and needs to be mentioned in this context. He was in born in Brno, the second largest city of the Czech Republic, as son of a sculptor. His "career" at grammar school was not promising – he suffered bad marks for his manners – so much so that he had to change schools frequently. He finally finished at the State Vocational School. After studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and the University of Technology in Dresden, he travelled to the United States where he worked for three years and gained experience as an unskilled worker in a variety of fields. Shortly after his return to Europe he started to work as an architect; a profession that would make him famous in Vienna.

Hermann Bahr wrote about the Viennese architects at the beginning 20th century:

> […] from this mighty man [Otto Wagner] who worked silently apart from the usual exclusive groups, a revolution has sprung forth. For a few years now, people have given up old architecture. Yesterday's fashion is not enjoyable anymore; the palaces which are decorative remnants of renaissance and baroque no longer have an effect. We desire to live in a way that corresponds to our needs, to clothe ourselves in a way that corresponds to our needs. No longer do we want to wear a costume, so our houses shall no longer wear costumes either.
>
> If we walk along the *Ringstraße*, we feel as if we were walking around a cheap carnival. Everyone is dressed up and wears a mask. For that kind of foolishness our lives have become too serious. We want to look them in the face. That is expressed with the slogan "realistic architecture". A building is supposed to serve its needs, not veil its purpose; it is meant to say clearly what it is. If someone has the power to shape a constructive solution for this problem, it is our artist. It seems almost ridiculous and unseemly to hide behind alien shapes. In the past,

people first and foremost demanded that a house is supposed to "look like something". Today, we demand that it be something. We are ashamed that we, as modern working people, live like princes and patricians from yesterday and the day before yesterday. We think that it is fraudulent. The house should reveal what it is, what kind of purpose it has, who lives in it and what kind of life that person is living. We are not baroque people; we do not live in the age of the renaissance. Why should we pretend that we are? […]

Joseph Maria Olbrich, *Wedding Tower*
on the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, 1908.
Photograph, 2009. Municipal Art Collection,
Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Darmstadt.
Photograph by Jürgen Schreiter.

Adolf Loos, View of the *Café Museum*,
Operngasse/Friedrichstraße, Vienna, 1899.
Photograph. Adolf Loos archive
in the Albertina, Vienna.

Obviously, Adolf Loos took these words to heart. The textile store Goldmann & Salatsch (1909/1910), which he planned and supervised, almost sparked a scandal. The pillars were lacking embellishment, there were no frames around the windows, and everywhere were just naked walls. Especially opposite the domed, neo-baroque *Michaelertor*, with its passageway to the Hofburg Palace, Loos' building was thought to be outrageous and insulting. The contrast could not have been sharper. Although a lightly decorative balustrade encloses the building and separates ground floor from second floor, the building is still "naked" and was thus perceived as tasteless by the general public opinion in Vienna. According to legend, Kaiser Franz Joseph refused to even look in the direction of the *Michaelertor* thereafter.

With structures like this, he set himself apart from Otto Wagner but similarly inspired a new line of architects. Loos remained true to his principle – distanced from the *Jugendstil*. Another project that displayed his purist stance towards ornamentation is the *Haus Steiner* (1910) which today is a class listed monument. With his various projects, mansion and house expansions, business offices and interior decoration from cafés to museums,

he represented another path to modernity; he paved the way for the minimalist style of modern architecture for the whole of central Europe. Loos explained and defended his principles in the famous essay collection *Ornament and Crime* (1908). He died on 23 August 1933 in Vienna.

Adolf Loos, Poster for Adolf Loos' lecture
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Wien Museum, Vienna.

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Pencil, pen, ink and watercolour on paper,
20 vignettes, each 5 x 5.5 cm.
Cabinet of Prints, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.

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NOTES

[1] The Studio, The Magazine of Art, *and* L'Artiste *were art magazines that were published in Paris and London. This form of publication had its zenith in the late 19th century, when public interest for applied art was at its highest*. Arts et décoration (1897), *first published in Paris, is another magazine from this tradition.*

[2] *South Kensington was a name commonly used for the Royal College of Art.*

[3] *This school of architecture that originated in the principles of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) defined the architect as a type of project leader who was responsible for the harmonic mesh of construction, decoration and interior decoration.*

[4] *A name she earned for her extraordinary skill at making dolls.*

[5] *From Rolf Hochhuth and H.H. Koch:* Aus Kaisers Zeiten - Bilder einer Epoche. (The Age of the Emperor - Images from an Epoch)

[6] *Bahr is possibly addressing church- and genre-painter Eugen Felix (1836/1837-1906).*

[7] *Two exclusive shopping streets in central Vienna.*

[8] *English translation, original is in German.*

[9] *Information from the Leopold Museum, 30 June 2010.*

[10] *Josef Maria Olbrich, Austellungskatalog, Darmstadt 1983, p. 6*